

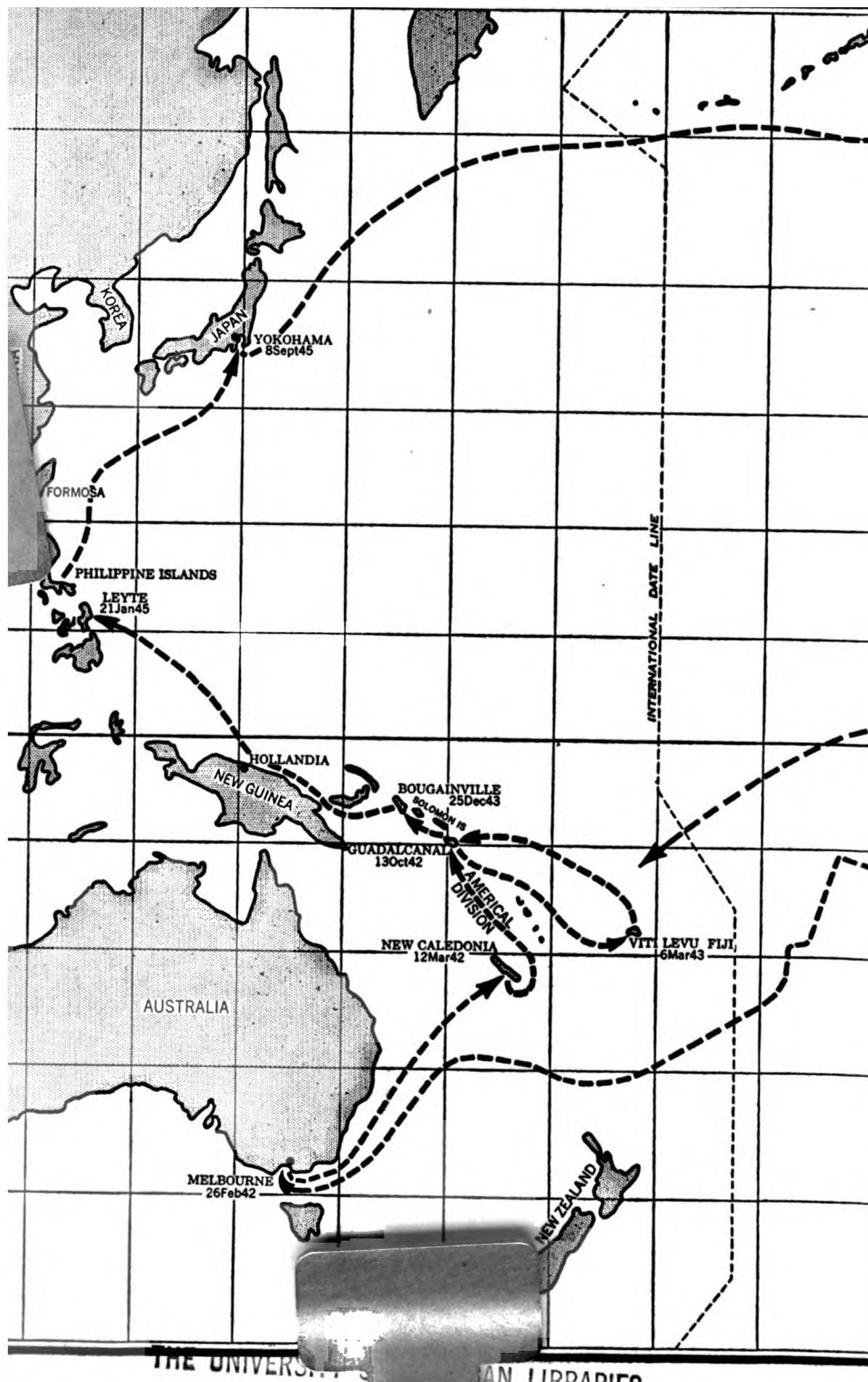
B

659,511

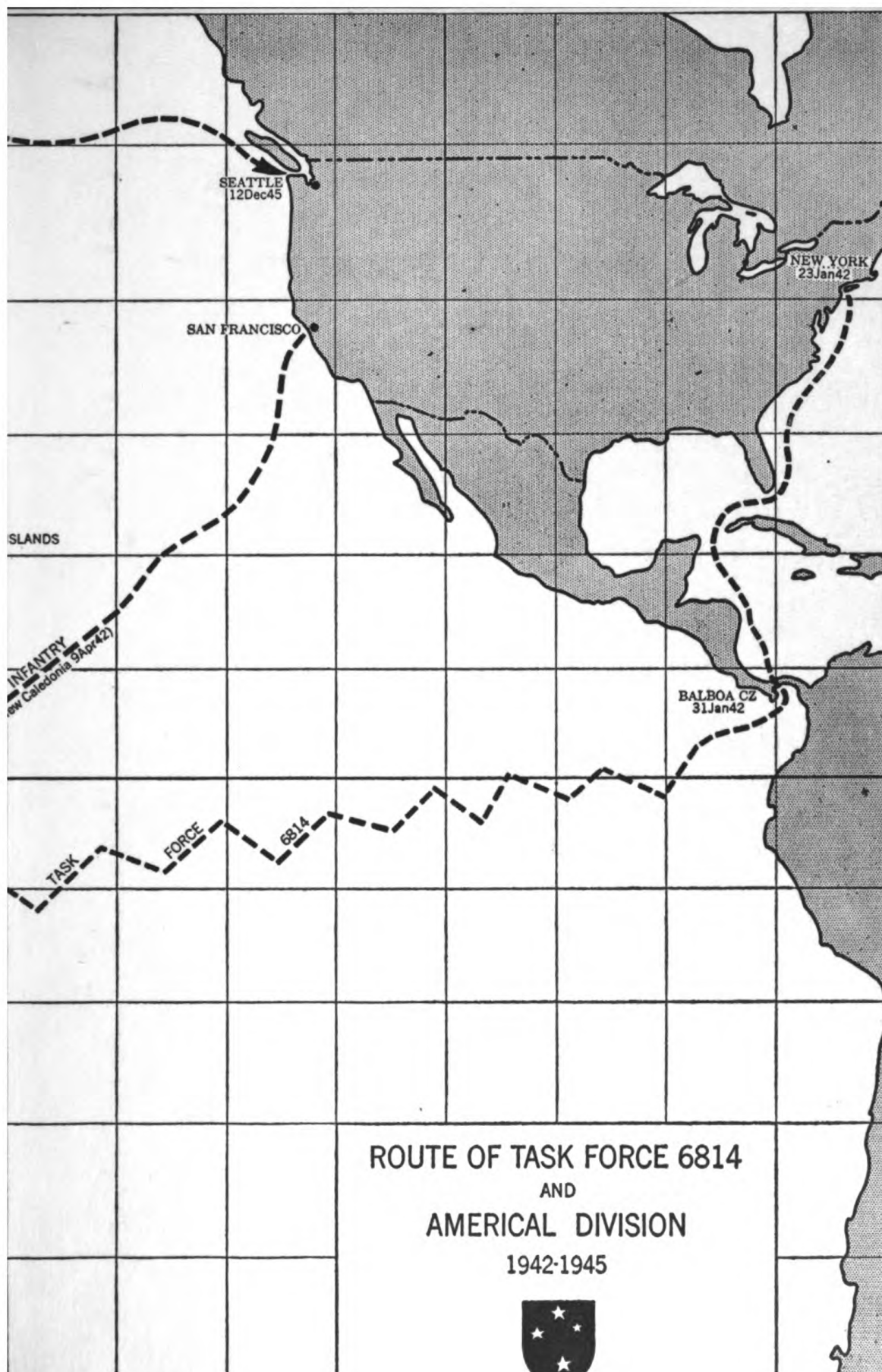
DUPL

Under the Southern Cross





THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARIES



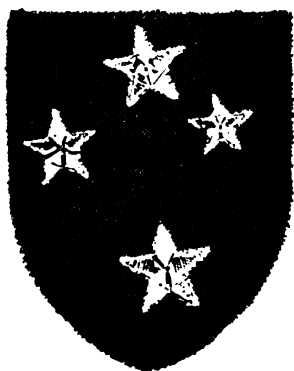
ROUTE OF TASK FORCE 6814
AND
AMERICAL DIVISION
1942-1945



Under the Southern Cross

Under the Southern Cross

THE SAGA OF THE AMERICAL DIVISION



BY CAPTAIN FRANCIS D. CRONIN

Combat Forces Press · Washington, D.C.

Copyright 1951 by Association of the United States Army. All rights reserved.
No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission.

For information address

Association of the United States Army, 1115 17th Street NW, Washington 6, D.C.

75
100-100000
100-100000
100-100000
100-100000

First edition

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

6L
UIC 230 1115-15-1
1300

*Not for fame or reward,
Not for place or for rank,
Not lured by ambition or goaded by necessity,
But in simple obedience to duty as they understood it,
These men suffered all, sacrificed all, dared all and died.*

—FROM THE CONFEDERATE MEMORIAL
IN ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

Photographic Editor

JOHN F. SPERRY

Staff Artist

GEORGE O. LLOYD, JR.

Contents

	Foreword	ix
	Acknowledgments	xi
<i>One:</i>	In the Beginning . . .	1
<i>Two:</i>	The Birth of the Americal	28
<i>Three:</i>	Baptism in the Solomons	41
<i>Four:</i>	West to Cape Esperance	72
<i>Five:</i>	Isa Lei	100
<i>Six:</i>	At Empress Augusta Bay	120
<i>Seven:</i>	"Hold at all Costs"	146
<i>Eight:</i>	The Expanding Outpost Line	168
<i>Nine:</i>	The Trail to Numa-Numa	192
<i>Ten:</i>	In the Shadows of Mount Bagana	210
<i>Eleven:</i>	Meanwhile, On Leyte	219
<i>Twelve:</i>	The Straits	246
<i>Thirteen:</i>	A Liberation is Planned	265
<i>Fourteen:</i>	Beachhead!	273
<i>Fifteen:</i>	Consolidation	308
<i>Sixteen:</i>	Showdown	335
<i>Seventeen:</i>	End of the Road: Japan!	355

<i>Eighteen:</i>	Mission Accomplished	377
<i>Appendix:</i>	In Memoriam	390
	Honor Roll	391
	The Total Cost	407
	Awards and Decorations	408
	Order of Battle	411
	Troop Lists	422
	The Americal Division, Inc.	431

Foreword

THIS IS THE WORLD WAR II HISTORY OF AN ORGANIZATION CONSIDERED BY many as one of the unique and most colorful combat units ever to serve in the United States Army in time of war—the Americal Division.

Despite its early entry into combat on Guadalcanal in 1942, and its subsequent long period of service in the Pacific, the Americal, as a unit, cannot lay claim to having beaten the Japanese alone. Japan was beaten to her knees by the collective power of the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Air Forces, and our allies. The Americal Division was a significant member of this powerful team of armed might which successfully overcame aggression in the Pacific.

The story of the Americal is primarily that of the humble riflemen of the infantry regiments, without whom the Division's combat record would not be what it is today. No mere words of praise or of appreciation for their daily sacrifices are sufficient to express the gratitude in the hearts of those who have seen them in action.

The story of the Americal is also that of the many men who worked with the riflemen or for them, directly or indirectly. Theirs were thankless tasks, performed under hardships of all kinds, but without these valuable men the regiments could not have operated efficiently for long.

As the Division itself fitted into the "big picture" as an active member of the greater team in the Pacific, so, too, did all officers and men of the Americal fit in as active members of a team within a team.

As written here, the history of the Americal Division has been taken from reports of operations, unit journals, and message files, and from other special reports and documents of historical significance. All of these papers have been supplemented through personal interviews with former key staff and command officers in attempts to clear up otherwise obscure points of information.

During the early stages of the work on this book, the author became aware of a shortage of records dealing with the activities of the service

units of the Division. On the whole, this shortage of information has been so great as to possibly give the reader the impression that these hard-working units have been overlooked in the story. Such, however, has not been the case.

Other shortages of records prevented the author from compiling a complete and accurate list of the names of those gallant officers and enlisted men who received awards and decorations. In all fairness, therefore, to those deserving ones whose names would inadvertently be omitted from any partial list which could be prepared, the author includes only a numerical summary of awards and decorations.

This history of the Americal Division represents the fruits of more than two years of work among records of the Division. As a whole, covering the entire life of the Division, it is as complete as time and space will allow. As such, it should stand primarily as a record, and a symbol, of the sincere courage and devotion to duty of all who served in the Americal.

FRANCIS D. CRONIN

Acknowledgments

THE TASK OF RECORDING THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAL DIVISION WAS carried out under the direction and guidance of Maj. Gen. William H. Arnold, last Commanding General of the Division. The author is sincerely grateful for his continued close interest in the work and in all of the perplexing problems connected with the difficult historical research. His keen critical analyses of chapter manuscripts helped the author avoid many serious pitfalls.

The author is genuinely aware of a debt owed Lt. Col. Mervyn M. Magee, last Division Chief of Staff, who initiated the work on this book. His interest in the progress of the work and his often expressed understanding of the unavoidable delays and difficulties were most heartening throughout.

A great many other former members of the Americal helped through interviews, letters, and through particular and general comments and recommendations concerning the data in the manuscript. Foremost among these are: Lt. Gen. John R. Hodge; Maj. Gens. Robert B. McClure and Edmund B. Sebree, Brig. Gen. Eugene W. Ridings, Col. Paul A. Gavan, Col. William D. Long, Col. LeCount H. Slocum, Lt. Col. William H. Biggerstaff, Lt. Col. Chester C. Holloway, Lt. Col. Samuel E. Gee, Lt. Col. James Taylor, Jr., Major John D. Townsend, Major Willard O. Foster, Major Donald R. Tam, Major David J. O'Rourke and George O. Lloyd, Jr.

The original work on the history of the Americal was undertaken by Lt. Thomas Lynch, while most of the important records of the Division were gathered in one central depository by Lt. Col. John F. P. Hill. More of the early research into these records was completed by the author's predecessor, Lt. Robert B. Carow. Without the foundations laid by these three, the task might have taken much longer.

While recording the Americal Division's history the author was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army. Upon reporting for duty, the then Chief of Military History,

Maj. Gen. Harry J. Malony, extended all available aid to the author and granted him *carte blanche* with respect to the manner in which the work would be accomplished. These privileges were again extended by General Malony's successor, Maj. Gen. Orlando Ward.

Other military and civilian personnel in the Office of the Chief of Military History gave freely of their time and efforts in aiding the author in countless ways. Among them are Brig. Gen. Paul M. Robinett, Col. E. D. Ellis, Col. Allison R. Hartman, Lt. Col. Thomas Badger, Major Charles F. Byars, Major James M. Whitmire, Jr., Capt. Francis H. Coakley, and Dr. John Miller.

The civilian personnel of the Historical Record Section, Departmental Records Branch of The Adjutant General's Office, custodians of the Americal Division's records, were most congenial and helpful during the months spent searching their files. Most accommodating were Miss Thelma K. Yarborough, Miss Margaret L. Emerson, Mr. Wilbur Nigh, Miss Mathilda Huber, Miss Sue Wallace, and Mrs. Lois Aldridge.

Many others in The Adjutant General's many branch offices helped immeasurably by providing priceless bits of information. Mr. O. W. Stratton, Jr., of the Strength Accounting Branch, provided the basic list of battle deaths on which the Honor Roll is built. Lt. Col. Robert C. Rodgers granted access to files from which the order of battle was constructed.

The photographic side of the history might well have suffered had it not been for the tireless efforts of the book's photographic editor, Capt. John F. Sperry. Officers and civilian personnel of the Army Pictorial Service, the Navy's Graphic Section and its Photographic Center, the Marine Corps Photo Service Section, and the Air Force Pictorial Service helped Captain Sperry and the author.

To Colonel Joseph I. Greene, Mr. N. J. Anthony and members of the staff of Combat Forces Press go many thanks for helping the author guide this book through its organization and printing. Their thoughtful consideration of the author's inexperience will always be remembered. The Combat Forces Press also handled all phases of distribution of this book.

No list of acknowledgments would be complete without mention of Dr. H. L. Bowen, of the Air Historical group, The Air University. A close friend, Dr. Bowen critically read the manuscript in all its stages and offered many sound comments and recommendations. Any unity of thought, any continuity of story or any literary merit which this work might possess is due largely to his efforts on the author's behalf.

To Mr. George O. Lloyd, Jr., a lifelong friend and former Division Artillery operations sergeant, go many thanks for the art work in this book. Although recovering from a serious illness when the book neared publication time, Mr. Lloyd found strength to design the endpapers and contribute his own impression of the heroic action which brought Staff Sgt. Jessie R. Drowley the Medal of Honor.

Also aiding in many ways were members of the Americal Division Club, the headquarters of which are located in Boston. Particular thanks go to Dominic J. Bianculli, Walter Anzoni, John J. Carey, Gerald Martel, and to Col. Harvey E. Landers, former Division Artillery executive officer, who, as a member of the staff of the *Boston Globe*, has helped with publicity for the book prior to its publication.

Thanks are also due Col. Robert Hackett who assisted the author immeasurably by making it possible for closer control to be maintained over the book in its final stages of publication. In addition, he also obtained the services of Mrs. Dorothy Williams, Miss Dorothy Evans, Mrs. Juanita Riner and Mrs. Virginia Palmer, all of whom shared the typing of the manuscript in its final form.

The maps that illustrate the text were prepared by Mr. J. W. Pumpelly under direction of the author.

The continued inspirational interest shown by the author's wife has most assuredly helped to overcome what might well have been a disheartening myriad of insurmountable obstacles.

The author will be ever mindful of the fact that he has truly been privileged to record the brilliant history which the colorful Americal Division made during World War II.

F. D. C.

Under the Southern Cross

In the Beginning . . .

IN THE BEGINNING WE WERE KNOWN AS TASK FORCE 6814. AHEAD for all of us lay many months of toil and sweat, blood and anguish, far removed from the comforting presence of loved ones. This was World War II. And this is the story of the Americal Division.

For the United States, World War II had begun suddenly. In one quick blow at Hawaii, Japan had plunged America into the world-wide struggle against the forces of tyranny and aggression.

American interests in the Pacific had long since been firmly established. In the weeks and months preceding Pearl Harbor the menace of Japan had served only to focus these broad interests in the eerie light of possibly impending war.

Interests in the welfare of the Pacific were not alone vested in Japan and the United States in these troubled prewar days. Britain and France, entangled in war against Germany and Italy, were also determined to protect their Pacific holdings against what Japan was to call "The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere."

However, developments in the course of the war in Europe created a condition peculiar to one principal island in the South Pacific. When France capitulated to Germany and Italy in June 1940, British and American diplomatic and military officials expressed grave concern over the future of the French colonial possession of New Caledonia.

The island of New Caledonia, situated some 850 miles northeast of Brisbane, Australia, had been a French colony since 1854. In peaceful prewar days its capital, Noumea, near the southern end of the island, had been known as "the Paris of the Pacific."

Down through the years the French had steadily improved the island as a source of minerals and agricultural products. It was not long until mining ranked as New Caledonia's chief industry; the island was found to be rich in deposits of chrome, cobalt, nickel, iron, manganese,

antimony and mercury ores. To this wealth local farmers and plantation owners added crops of coffee, copra, cotton, corn, tobacco, bananas and pineapples.

After the fall of France the New Caledonia government watched anxiously for developments in Europe. The French at home soon became divided. Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain took the top post in the new French government at Vichy in unoccupied France. General Charles de Gaulle, however, formed a Provisional Free French government-in-exile in London with the promise to continue the fight against Germany and Italy.

These developments complicated matters on New Caledonia. For weeks it was not certain whether the island's government, then under Georges Pelicier, would declare itself loyal to Pétain and his Vichy government or whether it would fall in line with De Gaulle and the Free French.

By September 5, 1940, however, pro-Vichy elements in the local government gained control. Governor Pelicier yielded to the commander of the island's militia, Lieutenant Colonel Denis, who then became governor. Denis's regime was destined for a short life, for De Gaulle, in London, reacted quickly.

On September 19, under orders from De Gaulle, Henri Sautot, French Resident Commissioner in the New Hebrides, arrived at Noumea to take over the governorship. Denis and his followers attempted to block this *coup d'état* but failed. When public opinion was found to be in favor of Sautot and an alliance with the Free French, Denis and the pro-Vichy faction stepped down. One of Sautot's first acts as governor was to deport Denis and several of his comrades.

Had the New Caledonia government remained pro-Vichy, the Japanese, prior to the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, might well have attempted to bring about a "limited occupation" as they were to do in French Indo-China. Success to any degree in any such venture on the part of the Japanese would certainly have placed all of the island's resources at the disposal of the Axis.

With Sautot now in office, there was no doubt concerning the loyalty of the islanders as a whole to the Allied cause. In the days to come New Caledonia could assume its proper position in Allied strategy in the Pacific.

Foreseeing the possible future need, General de Gaulle, shortly before Pearl Harbor, offered New Caledonia as an advanced Pacific naval base for the United States. Negotiations were opened in an attempt to

reach an agreement quickly with the Free French. The matter of air bases entered into the picture during subsequent talks. Once the Japanese had done their damage at Pearl Harbor, however, the new war in the Pacific placed a stamp of urgency on the conferences.

The Free French reaction was swift. On December 15, 1941, Admiral Georges d'Argenlieu, a high commissioner sent to New Caledonia three months previously, was instructed by his government to make available to the United States all necessary facilities for the construction of new, vitally needed air bases. The Japanese were already on the march; the race was on!

Prior to the outbreak of the war in the Pacific it was most probably thought by the French that an accord could be reached with the British whereby Empire troops from Australia or New Zealand could be called upon to help defend New Caledonia in time of emergency. The French colonial troops, plus a garrison of native soldiers, would hardly be able to offer lengthy and effective resistance to any concerted Japanese invasion of the island.

With the Japanese Empire now being expanded rapidly by force of arms, Australian troops had become primarily concerned with the defense of their home soil. New Zealand forces, relatively few in number, had, in addition to the defense of their home islands, been assigned the task of protecting the Fiji Islands, also a keypoint of interest to the Japanese. The French, therefore, could look only to the United States for aid.

In early January 1942, following acceptance of the De Gaulle offer, the War Department General Staff set up a priority list for the shipment of troops to vital islands in the South Pacific. High on that list was New Caledonia. Troops were now to be sent to the island in sufficient strength to defend it and its soon-to-be-constructed air bases should the enemy attempt to conquer it.

Once the priority list had been agreed upon, planning was immediately begun for the selection of combat units for the assignment and for their rapid movement to the island. A hurried search of station lists in the United States was made in order to select readily available regiments, battalions and companies.

A War Department telegram brought Brig. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, Jr., to Washington from his post as Commanding General of the Infantry Replacement Training Center at Camp Croft, South Carolina. Upon arrival in Washington, General Patch was informed that he was to take command of the forces shortly to be dispatched to New Caledonia.

By January 14 The Adjutant General, under instructions from the General Staff, had issued a secret letter ordering General Patch to take command of the force being formed. The letter listed the units to be assigned to the force which, according to plans, was to sail from the New York Port of Embarkation on or about January 20, under the code designation 6814. The letter further stated that General Patch was to report to the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in Australia, on arrival there, for additional orders and instructions.

Copies of this secret letter were sped to many parts of the nation, to units assigned to what was to become known as Task Force 6814. Units stationed in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia were alerted and readied for prompt truck and rail movement to the New York Port of Embarkation.

In spite of the fact that the organization and movement of Task Force 6814 was being carried out with as much dispatch as possible, French officials, in mid-January, were making no secret of their concern over the fact that no U.S. troops had yet arrived in New Caledonia. Repeatedly they were assured by U.S. military and diplomatic representatives that the United States was fully aware of the situation and that the necessary steps were being taken with all possible haste.

An examination of the Task Force 6814 troop list showed that many of the key units of the task force were those declared surplus when the 26th and 33d Infantry Divisions, recently federalized Massachusetts and Illinois National Guard divisions, respectively, were reorganized into triangular infantry divisions. In some ways Task Force 6814 might have looked a bit like an infantry division but, for the most part, it appeared as nothing but an odd conglomeration of spare parts, a wartime military stew of men and equipment.

So multitudinous were the tasks connected with the movement of the task force to the port of embarkation and with its subsequent staging that the original sailing date "on or about January 20" could not be closely met. As a result, instructions were altered to call for the force to sail when ready.

Seven troop transports were quickly assembled to carry the task force: *Argentina*, *Barry*, *Cristobal*, *Ericsson*, *McAndrew*, *Santa Elena* and *Santa Rosa*. These ships represented practically all the vessels available along the East Coast in those hectic early days of the war.

After the outbreak of the war, these ships were hastily prepared for the transport roles they were to play in the many months to come. All

fancy fittings had been removed in record time and pipe-framed bunks had been installed in all vacant space, one above another, from the deck of each compartment to the overhead.

The cargo of supplies and equipment accompanying the task force was gathered as rapidly as possible from all sources and sped to the docks. Here, in the light of day or the dark of night, loading went ahead. Items, regardless of identity, were virtually thrown into the nearest open hatch to be sorted later. Speed was the keynote of these early operations of the infant task force in New York. Looking back on it all now, the marvel may well be not that the task force functioned so well in those trying days, but that it functioned at all.

Even while the loading of cargo was being completed in New York, Gen. George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the Army, informed Adm. Ernest J. King, Chief of Naval Operations, that it was now impossible to tell what the situation might be in New Caledonia a month in advance. For this reason, he added, it was now of the utmost importance that Task Force 6814 be sent first to Australia. In so doing, it was pointed out, the task force commander and his staff might be brought up to date on the most recent developments in the local situation in the South Pacific. During this analysis of the situation, the troops and equipment now being rushed aboard the transports would have time to be more efficiently loaded.

It was still dark on the morning of January 23, 1942, when the first of the seven transports cast off from the docks of the New York Port of Embarkation. A damp, winter cold penetrated to the very bones of the twenty thousand officers, nurses and enlisted men of the task force who tossed in restless sleep as the ships headed downstream and out to sea. Unheralded, and almost unnoticed, American troops were sailing for the Pacific.

Meanwhile, even before Task Force 6814 had sailed, the French were again expressing grave concern over the safety of their island. Japanese submarines were reported in waters near New Caledonia, presumably on reconnaissance for suitable landing beaches for their troops.

This now resulted in an astounding statement by an authorized representative of the Free French government. If troops and equipment were not in New Caledonia, went the statement, before the completion of the airfield under construction at Plaine des Gaiacs, French authorization for further U.S. defensive work would be withdrawn.

This seemed to require an immediate answer from the United

States. Yet, if the French were told of the movement plans now being carried out, there was the risk that such information might leak out. Rather than risk this, U.S. officials assured the French, in general terms only, that every effort was now being made to get troops and equipment to New Caledonia in sufficient strength as quickly as was humanly possible.

Similar repeated threats by the French were heard even as the task force steamed steadily toward the South Pacific; their fears were stated and restated. Each was answered with an assurance that the United States was fully cognizant of the dangers and that troops were being sent as rapidly as possible.

As the task force sailed from New York, General Patch turned over nominal command to Brig. Gen. William I. Rose, Commanding General of the 51st Infantry Brigade, elements of which were part of the force. General Patch's chief of staff, Lt. Col. Edmund B. Sebree, due to his familiarity with the mission of the task force and with presailing developments in the situation in the Pacific, aided General Rose in active command of the unit. General Rose, in bringing his troops to New York on sudden and almost unexpected orders, had had little or no time in which to be briefed on the mission of the force which he now commanded.

General Patch, meanwhile, remained in Washington, where he could keep abreast of the situation as relayed to War Department intelligence and operations offices by radio from the Pacific. It was planned for him to later fly to Australia in time to join the task force there and move on up to New Caledonia by ship or plane as conditions permitted.

However, so strong were the continued French threats to rescind authorization for further work that the War Department finally decided that New Caledonia officials must be informed of the U.S. plans. In order to reassure the French High Commissioner, Admiral d'Argenlieu, General Patch was now ordered, in his flight to Australia, to stop off in Noumea to confer personally with the local officials. General Patch, in a closed conference, was to inform D'Argenlieu of the specific nature of the actions the United States had been taking since the acceptance of De Gaulle's offer in December. This, it was hoped, would permanently quiet the often expressed French fears that the United States was letting New Caledonia fall into Japanese hands.

In the meantime, the seven ships bearing Task Force 6814 steamed south along the Atlantic Coast, escorted by heavy cruisers, old-type

destroyers, blimps and land-based patrol planes. Dull but important lifeboat drills began almost immediately after the departure as the routine of shipboard life became settled.

The quiet journey southward was interrupted one afternoon as the destroyers sprang into action, flitting back and forth through and around the convoy in search of an enemy submarine which had been contacted in the area. Patterns of depth charges broke the surface of the sea, erupting in foaming geysers of water. There followed the expected rumors, spreading from ship to ship and from man to man, that a German U-boat had been sent to the bottom.

With the exception of the single submarine alert, the voyage southward down the Atlantic Coast and through the Caribbean Sea proved uneventful. As the ships moved into warmer tropical waters the increase in temperatures forced the troops to lay aside the heavy woolen uniforms in favor of the cooler cottons.

By the afternoon of January 31 all ships of the convoy had safely cleared the Pacific end of the Panama Canal, climaxing the first and shortest leg of the trip to the South Pacific. The vessels now moved into Balboa to take on additional water and provisions for the westward trip.

By this time the first semblance of organization had crept into Task Force 6814. En route to Panama plans had been drawn up for the formation of a general staff in the headquarters of the task force. Under the direction of Colonel Sebree, the chief of staff, four basic assignments were made and announced.

As G-1 (officer in charge of personnel and administration) Colonel Sebree appointed Col. Raymond E. S. Williamson. Lt. Col. Bryant E. Moore became G-2 (officer in charge of intelligence activities). Lt. Col. Alexander M. George was announced as G-3 (officer in charge of plans, operations, and training). The supply officer's post (G-4) was delegated to Lt. Col. John W. Homewood.

Here at Balboa time again was important. In less than twenty-four hours all seven ships had taken on fresh water and provisions and were made ready to stand out to sea. Escorted now by light cruisers, destroyers and gunboats, all on their way to Pacific assignments, the convoy moved out to the southwest.

As the *Argentina*, transport group flagship, left Balboa, it was discovered that a medical officer and a nurse had been left at the docks after having been sent ashore on official business. Only by some fast maneuvering were they able to board another of the transports moving out to sea. It was not until many days later, in Australia, that

the pair was able to return to the *Argentina* to claim personal baggage.

Just as the coast of Central America was slipping from view over the horizon, one of the ships' radios picked up a startling broadcast. An Axis radio station, in a transmission probably originating somewhere in Central America, reported the passage of the convoy. The commentator quite accurately told of the total number of ships and the type of each. There were few in the convoy knowing of this broadcast who could now doubt the seriousness of the situation and of the possible outcome of the Axis having gained this important information.

Due to the speed with which the transports were fitted for troop-carrying duty, recreational facilities were at a minimum. To partially fill the existing void, golden-voiced men acted as news commentators in "broadcasts" over the ships' loudspeaker systems. Amateur and professional entertainers produced programs of songs and comedy skits. In addition, the entertainers staged a number of "live" shows featuring all the amateur talent, good and bad, willing and available on each ship.

Other enterprising officers and enlisted men, when conditions permitted, printed and published ships' newspapers. Foremost among these was *The Twin-Ocean Gazette*, which was published on board the *Argentina*. Its editors conservatively admitted that their paper "held the convoy together." Filled to a great extent with "contributions from our subscribers" and with news gathered from the ships' radios, these papers were also colored with abundant supplies of jokes and witty sayings, most of which were old and stale but nonetheless enjoyable.

Once the voyage was resumed the troops settled down to the boredom of transport life, broken only by the wholehearted attempts at recreation. Directives required that unit training be carried on as best it could under existing conditions, but soon this training became boring for all. Training programs featured lectures and conferences on jungle tactics, tropical diseases, the Japanese Army, and on many other closely allied subjects.

On the morning of February 5, as the ships steamed across the placid blue waters of the Pacific, navigation officers huddled over their charts in the wardroom of the convoy flagship. Pencils sped back and forth across the papers. One navigation officer, then another, stepped out onto the bridge to "shoot the sun" with his sextant. Then the computations were quietly completed and passed from one to another for a final check. This was a serious situation. Finally, with a unified nod of heads, all agreed that the figures were accurate beyond all possible doubt. At

this very point and at this very date, the convoy was to stage a rendezvous with King Neptune.

Shortly thereafter, the mighty and omnipresent keeper of Davy Jones's Locker appeared on each of the ships and called his court to order. "Hostages" from among the troops were arraigned before His Majesty and "charged" with attempting to pass over the Equator without his express permission. Each "hostage" was summarily found guilty and sentenced to suffer such oceanic tortures as the King desired. With utter disregard for rank and station in life, the sentences, passed on officers and men alike, were quickly executed. After each had paid his debt to nautical society, all hands were granted safe passage over the hidden barrier which separates the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

The crossing of the Equator brought about an abrupt change in seasons. Mid-winter quickly became mid-summer, for below the Equator the seasons are opposite those in the Northern Hemisphere. Ahead lay a Fourth of July to be celebrated in the winter season. Christmas was to be a summer holiday. It was confusing at first, but later, stationed in habitually warm climates, the men paid little attention to what the particular season might have been.

During the remainder of the voyage to Australia the inadequacy of facilities aboard the ships became more and more apparent. Life, at best, became simplified to the point of standing in line for everything. In a theme entitled "Private Pillsbury Goes to Australia," Wolfred Freeman, an enlisted man in the 101st Medical Regiment, stated his case:

"We stand in line for mess, we stand in line for the latrines, we stand in line for showers, we stand in line for the medical, and now we stand in line for the canteen. No wonder they call 'em ocean liners!"

During the latter stages of the journey, as supplies of fresh water diminished, each officer and enlisted man was limited to one canteen of water per day. As a result, saltwater showers became the only means of maintaining any semblance of cleanliness. Such showers amounted to a mere wetting-down of the body since most ordinary soaps would not lather in the hard water.

It was initially thought that the sanitary facilities on board the ships would be sufficient to handle the normal needs of the men. However, when dysentery broke out on several of the vessels in mid-Pacific, these facilities were taxed beyond reasonable limits. The resulting conditions ranked as the most distressing of the entire trip.

On the evening of February 26 the convoy turned into the harbor of Melbourne, in southeastern Australia, and moved quickly up to the

docks. The men breathed a sigh of relief in unison when it was announced that all troops would be unloaded.

According to prepared plans, the debarkation began almost immediately. Rather than risk enemy raids on concentrations of troops in the dock area of Melbourne, steps were taken to disperse the units over as wide an area as possible. Trains and trucks transported troops to Ballarat, Bendigo, Camp Darley, Camp Royal Park and to scattered parts of the city of Melbourne.

In Ballarat and Bendigo, where no troop-housing facilities or camp sites were to be found, officers and enlisted men were billeted in private homes. Throughout the entire area over which Task Force 6814 was now spread, the Australian people took the "Yanks" into their hearts and homes. These all-too-short days ashore in Melbourne became happy and memorable ones for all concerned.

As had been planned when the transports were loaded in New York, much of the cargo was unloaded from the ships and sorted on the docks. The gruelling heat of the Australian summer made the work extremely tiresome and arduous. But within an amazingly short time the partial unloading, sorting and reloading had been completed.

The speed with which the Task Force had been processed for shipment from New York seemingly forced the two medium artillery battalions to leave their 155mm howitzers behind. However, unknown to everyone concerned, the howitzers had actually been loaded on one of the ships. But evidence of this fact had not been recorded on the ship's cargo manifests. In the meantime, therefore, the battalions were naturally thought to be without their basic weapons.

To bridge the gap caused by the apparent lack of organic howitzers, task force supply officers succeeded in negotiating the loan of two dozen British-made howitzers, twelve of which were 18-pounders and twelve 25-pounders. In addition, the Australians, who furnished the howitzers, also sent along a detachment of an officer, a warrant officer, and thirteen noncommissioned officers to train the American artillerymen in the tactical use and in the care and maintenance of these weapons.

On the morning of March 6 Task Force 6814, loaded once again on the seven transports—this time in a more orderly fashion—pulled away from the Melbourne docks and set a course toward Noumea, New Caledonia. Early in the trip the *Ericsson* developed power trouble and was forced to return to Melbourne for emergency repairs. The remainder of the ships, escorted by fleet units of the U.S. Navy, moved on to Noumea.

During the very early weeks of the war in the Pacific, the French

on New Caledonia watched anxiously the Japanese drive to expand the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" by force of arms.

After having suddenly blasted the U.S. Pacific Fleet into temporary ineffectiveness at Pearl Harbor, the Japanese wasted little time in striking at Guam and Wake. These two tiny U.S. outposts fell only after heroic resistance by their determined garrisons. The Philippines quickly felt the brunt of Japanese power and, in time, the names of Bataan and Corregidor were to be written into history.

British possessions in the Orient also bore their share of the enemy attacks. Hong Kong was rapidly taken under siege and this colorful port fell in a matter of days. Singapore, assaulted from the land to its north, was swiftly gathered into the expanding Japanese Empire.

In a series of amphibious operations the Japanese now sped down through the Netherlands East Indies. Lae, Salamaua and Rabaul on New Guinea and New Britain fell as the drive went on. On into the Solomon Islands the Japanese pushed as the threat to the United States-Australia line of communications became greater. From newly won bases in New Guinea the enemy began intensive bombing of Darwin and Port Moresby.

Small wonder, then, that the French were fearful of the future as it concerned vital New Caledonia. There was no indication of where the Japanese might strike next. In these troubled days no U.S. troops in strength were to be found on the island. Now, however, having gained a detailed knowledge of the situation as it appeared in the first week in March, Task Force 6814 was on its way to Noumea to carry out its assigned mission.

Back in Washington, meanwhile, General Patch had kept abreast of the very latest Pacific developments, keenly watching all dispatches from the area with which he was to be primarily concerned. As his task force neared Australia he prepared to join it by air, planning, in accordance with his latest orders, to stop off in Noumea to confer with Admiral d'Argenlieu and the French officials there.

Shortly after leaving Washington General Patch fell ill with pneumonia at Trinidad and was returned to the United States for hospitalization. From his hospital bed he still kept abreast of the changing situation while awaiting word from medical officers that he could leave. Even before he had completely recovered the General succeeded in obtaining his release and was on his way to the Pacific by way of San Francisco.

Leaving San Francisco by air, General Patch flew first to Hawaii, where he conferred with top military men there. He then boarded a

Pan-American clipper for the trip to Suva, Fiji, where he boarded a Navy patrol plane for the last leg of the trip to Noumea.

Arriving in Noumea on March 7, the day after his task force had left Melbourne, General Patch was greeted by Admiral d'Argenlieu, following which the two went almost immediately into conference. The news he brought to the island with him allayed all of the fears of the French and opened the door to full cooperation between the forces of the two countries.

In advance of the convoy bearing the task force to Noumea, General Rose, Colonel Sebree, and an additional party had flown to the New Caledonia capital to complete arrangements for the arrival of the troops. Here General Patch joined in the preparation of the basic defense plans for the island.

At this time the commander of the task force brought out his own personal orders, plus late information obtained in Washington prior to his departure for the Pacific. The General's orders were brief and to the point:

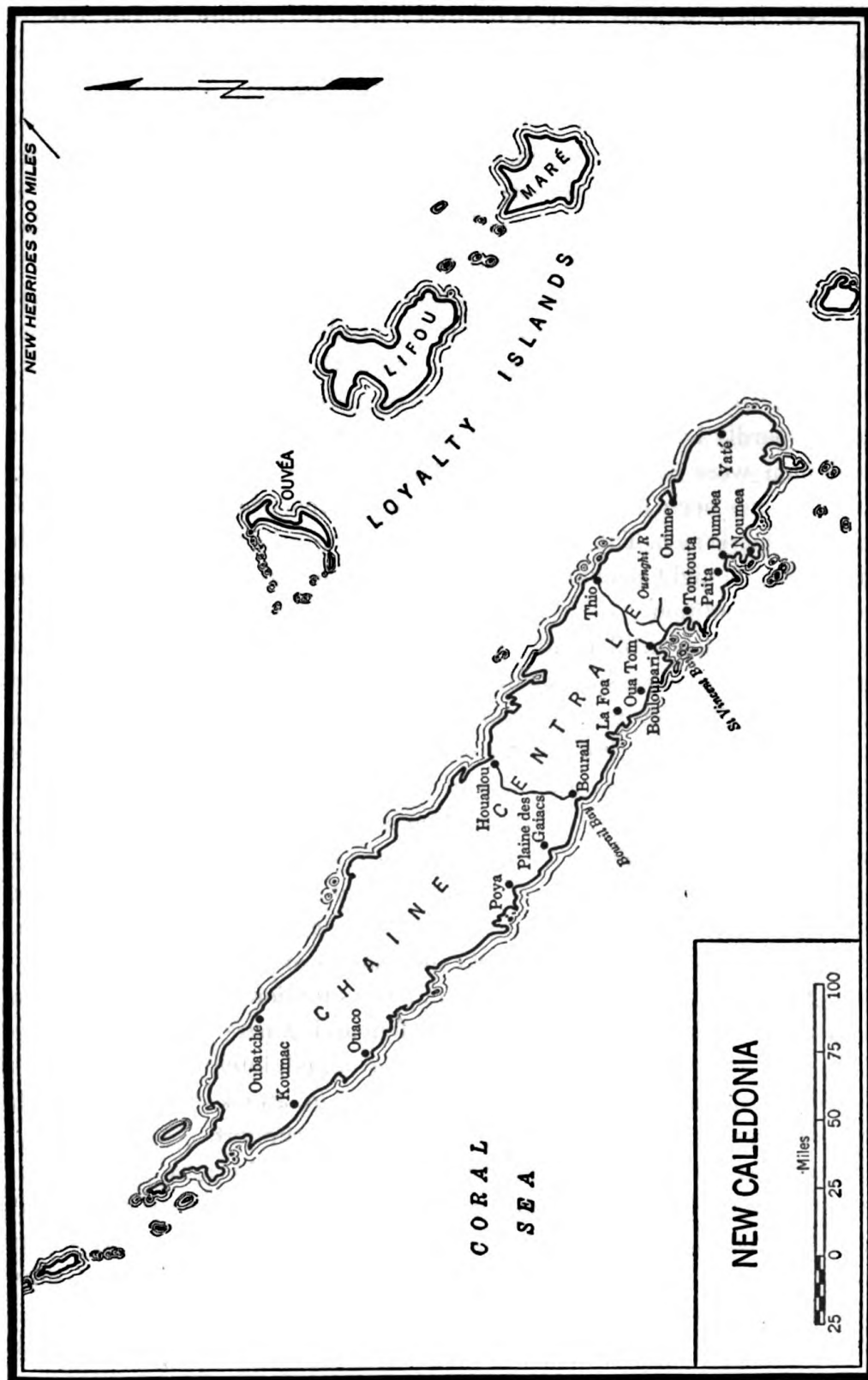
"In cooperation with the military forces of the United Nations, hold New Caledonia against attack."

Between the lines of these most simply stated orders could hardly be seen the many days and weeks of toil required for their fulfillment. With little or no naval and air support, two infantry regiments, two field artillery battalions and an odd assortment of supporting troops were now charged with the defense of a cigar-shaped island 250 miles in length and some 30 miles across.

The *Chaine Centrale*, a rugged, multi-peaked mountain range, runs the length of the island, making coast-to-coast travel and communication difficult. Much of the narrow coastal plain is swampy and almost impenetrable. The coral reef which rings the island is found to contain many navigable breaks leading into quiet inshore waters.

New Caledonia's principal highway at this time was one narrow road which wound its way along the western coast. Several secondary spurs crossed the island to the eastern shores through breaks in the *Chaine Centrale*. Highways along the east coast were few and virtually impassable for military traffic.

Had the Japanese invaded New Caledonia now, while Task Force 6814 was hustling toward Noumea, they would have found only small garrisons of French and Australian forces. The two forces combined could



scarcely have repelled any concerted Japanese attempt to put troops ashore, but they might have made a creditable record for themselves during later stages of any such campaign.

Of the two groups, the Australian 3d Independent Company, under Major Donald G. M. Matheson, could have offered the stronger resistance. This company of Commandos, numbering 21 officers and 312 enlisted men, in the event of an invasion by the enemy was to have delayed the Japanese by breaking up into small groups and carrying out harassing attacks as much as possible. On the island since January 25, the company had already been broken up into groups of about twenty men each and had completed a partial exploration of New Caledonia's rugged interior.

The Free French garrison, although far outnumbering the Australians, would hardly have been as effective. Less than half of the 1,400 officers and men were adequately armed. Many of the rifles, ancient Lebel's, would have been extremely poor weapons even when in the hands of capable marksmen. The French, however, were quite well equipped with a number of light machine guns, all of which had been maintained in excellent condition.

The French artillery at this time consisted of a battery of 65mm mountain guns and a battery of 95mm coastal defense guns. All of these were in position around Noumea harbor, set to drive off any invaders moving into the harbor. None of the weapons, though, would have been very effective against ships of modern design.

In addition, the total ammunition supply for all light and heavy weapons on the island was sufficient only for a short campaign. Any determined defense, designed either to beat back a Japanese landing in full force or to hold against an all-out enemy drive on Noumea, might well have quickly exhausted the island's ammunition stocks.

This, fundamentally, was the military situation in New Caledonia in early March. This was all the French and Australians would have had to offer in defense at a time when Allied intelligence estimates listed the Japanese as possibly being able to attack the island with at least one division, plus strong naval and air support.

It was into this picture that Task Force 6814 now stepped on March 12 as the first six ships carrying the bulk of the troops moved into Noumea harbor from the Coral Sea. The grave military situation had now been altered favorably. The first lap in the race against time had been won.

Although Noumea's harbor was found to be wide and deep, its dock

facilities were decidedly lacking. Only the smaller ships could be handled at the Grand Quai and the Nickel Docks. The larger ships would be required to unload troops and cargo at anchor in the stream.

In the immediate area only a few old barges and lighters were found; these were quickly pressed into service for ship-to-shore shuttle service. On the shore native labor crews were gathered to aid task force personnel who were to serve as cargo handlers.

With little loss of time troops were rushed ashore. Preparations were made to receive cargo as it came from the ships. The possibility of Japanese air raids was not overlooked. Vitally needed shipping could not be caught in the harbor.

Because the trucks of the task force units were not initially unloaded, many units were required to march over the hot and dusty New Caledonia roads to selected bivouac areas. An attempt was made to utilize local automotive equipment, but little of value could be located.

Within a short time supplies and equipment began piling up on the docks and beaches in and around Noumea. Four months' rations for twenty thousand troops, closely packed for lack of suitable storage space, exposed to the sizzling heat of the tropical sun, now presented an excellent target to the Japanese; fortunately, they never took advantage of the situation. Finally, as trucks were unloaded and placed in operation, the cargo was sorted and moved to widely dispersed dumps around the capital.

Slowly but surely now, the scene of early confusion was fading to a definite pattern of order and efficiency. Task Force 6814 was growing in age and wisdom.

Under basic instructions from the War Department, other key islands in the vicinity were to be included in the primary defense plans for New Caledonia. These were the New Hebrides, 250 miles northeast of New Caledonia and some six hundred miles west of the Fiji Islands. Jointly administered by high commissioners of both France and Great Britain, these islands formed the apex of a triangle pointing directly toward Japanese forces moving southeastward through the Solomons.

U.S. occupation of at least one of the major islands in the New Hebrides, it was considered, might temporarily counteract any enemy thrust into the group. Therefore General Patch and his staff wasted little time in dispatching troops to the New Hebrides with orders to establish an outpost.

On March 17, under command of Brig. Gen. William I. Rose, the

forces chosen to gain control of the islands sailed from Noumea. The group, later known as Force A, consisted of:

- Company L, 182d Infantry;
- Company M, 182d Infantry;
- Detachment of Medical Detachment, 182d Infantry;
- Detachment of Service Company, 182d Infantry;
- One platoon of Company B, 101st Engineer Regiment.

Arriving at the island of Efate two days later, General Rose set up his headquarters in the capital city of Port-Vila and began organizing the island's defenses.

The primary mission of Task Force 6814 was the defense of New Caledonia against enemy attack. A twofold basic element formed the foundation for all orders now being drawn up by the task force staff. First, the city of Noumea and its most important harbor area was to be held. And second, the island's completed and partially completed airfields were to be defended to the last.

Due to the wide geographical separation of strategic points and the relatively small number of combat troops available for defensive duty at this time, the general plan for the island became based on a series of outposts. This cordon-type defensive arrangement would allow the greatest protection for each key area without an appreciable weakening of the island's defense plan as a whole.

At this time the only completed airfield on New Caledonia was the one located at Tontouta, thirty-two miles above Noumea. A second airfield was now under construction at Plaine des Gaiacs, 120 miles farther to the northwest. In addition, a third airfield was in its early stages of construction at Koumac, near the northern end of the island. This latter airfield, however, was subsequently destroyed and abandoned before its completion because of the tactical complexities involving its defense.

Prior to the actual assignment of regimental and battalion sectors of responsibility, ground reconnaissance was rapidly completed. The initially limited amount of transportation on the island necessitated the pressing into service of a number of Noumea's bright-blue taxis and their wild-driving, horn-blowing operators.

Though making an important early contribution to the sources of the task force, these taximen learned some never-to-be-forgotten lessons in courtesies of the road. In days gone by, before the arrival of the Americans, the drivers felt that the mere honking of a horn gave them an undeniable right of way over any other vehicle. When American

vehicles, driven by men unfamiliar with the customs of the land, failed to yield at the sound of a horn, this time-worn trait was abandoned. The sight of friends bereft of taxis to drive and horns to blow forced surviving drivers to give in to destiny, to slow down, and to cease blowing horns.

By March 19, a week after the landing at Noumea, the two infantry regiments began moving to assigned sectors. The island was now split into two main areas, each assigned to one of the regiments.

Establishing a command post near Bourail, the 132d Infantry, commanded by Col. LeRoy E. Nelson, took over the northern sector, covering approximately two-thirds of the island's 7,756 square miles. The Illinois National Guard regiment was to defend the airfields at Plaine des Gaiacs and Koumac, plus Bourail Bay, the cross-island roads and other key harbors and inlets in the north. Elements of the Australian garrison remained in the 132d's new sector to instruct the men of the regiment in their rough-and-tumble, hand-to-hand tactics.

The 182d Infantry, with headquarters a short distance north of Noumea, took over the southern sector, which included the capital. Noumea harbor, Tontouta airfield and the Boulopari-Thio road also fell under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts National Guard regiment commanded by Col. Howard E. Fuller. The Free French forces, under orders from General Patch, were to assist and support the 182d Infantry in this sector.

The 754th Tank Battalion, one of the first tank battalions sent to the South Pacific, was not assigned control of any definite sector. Rather, the battalion was designated as a reserve force, a powerful combat arm, which could be dispatched quickly to either regimental sector in the event of an emergency.

Under the general defense plan, the mission of the artillery units in the task force became that of coastal defense. The 3d Battalion, 244th Coast Artillery, with its two batteries of 155mm guns, was assigned the protection of the approaches to Noumea harbor. The fulfillment of the mission assigned the 1st Battalion, 180th Field Artillery Regiment, and the 2d Battalion, 123d Field Artillery Regiment, however, was somewhat complicated by the almost immediate arrival of those battalions' organic weapons, the 155mm howitzers once thought left behind.

En route to New Caledonia from Australia the assignment of the borrowed British artillery pieces resulted in the 2d Battalion, 123d Field Artillery, becoming an 18-pounder battalion, while the 1st Battalion, 180th Field Artillery, used 25-pounders. But, while the two battalions were

still in bivouac outside of Noumea, awaiting assignment of sectors, and learning to use the British weapons, the 155mm howitzers began arriving. The problem arose as to what should be done with the now surplus 18- and 25-pounders.

The problem was solved in a rather unexpected manner by the commander of the 180th Field Artillery, Col. John Agnew, who had been placed in charge of the task force's artillery units. He arranged for the transfer of four 25-pounders to the 244th Coast Artillery, forming a composite 3d Battalion within that unit. Within the 1st Battalion, 180th Field Artillery, two provisional firing batteries were formed to man the remaining eight 25-pounders. These two batteries were formed as separate, complete firing batteries within the battalion. The 2d Battalion of the 123d Field Artillery now activated three provisional firing batteries to utilize their 18-pounders, but their new batteries were formed basically as additional gun sections within the unit's organic firing batteries.

In spite of the complicated weapons situation, the battalions were now able to take up their duties as their sectors were assigned. The 180th Field Artillery dispersed its five batteries through the 182d Infantry sector and the 123d moved north into the sector of the 132d Infantry as the coast defense as direct support missions were more specifically outlined.

After the landing the engineer units quickly unloaded and uncased their equipment, checked and processed it, and began working. Much needed to be done—construction on the airfields, maintenance work on the island's narrow roads, and many other thankless tasks made difficult mainly by the intense tropical heat. Although frequent heavy rains somewhat eased the effect of the heat, they played havoc with the highways, often causing serious washouts which isolated parts of the island.

Readable maps of New Caledonia were practically non-existent when the task force arrived; the only one generally available was a 1:400,000 French map printed for tourist use. Topographical units undertook the task of improving upon this map and making it generally available to the units.

By early April supplies had begun arriving on the island with a fair degree of regularity. Quartermaster units, having previously set up subordinate units to provide food and clothing for the troops, enlarged upon their operations. Truck convoys moved the length and breadth of the island, bringing supplies to even the smallest and most remote units.

In some instances it was impossible to reach small garrisons directly by truck. To counter this, tugs and barges were put into coastwise service

on supply runs. In the early days on the island, several of the ancient, decrepit barges sank with precious cargoes on board. Divers, using equipment borrowed from the Navy, went to the bottom of the inshore waters to recover vitally needed items of equipment.

The continuous use of trucks on the dusty, bumpy New Caledonia roads almost immediately raised the problem of motor maintenance. Ordnance units pitched in to keep the trucks and automotive equipment moving as long as possible until an adequate system of replacement of vehicles and parts could be established.

These units, and many others, worked long, hard hours during the first weeks on New Caledonia. There was much to be done to make the island an important base; and much *was* done. In many ways it was still as much a race against time as it had been in New York in January, but it was a race that was being won by a task force formed of men who were determined not to lose.

As April rolled around few who knew this task force in its infancy would now recognize this rapidly growing child of war. Its commanders were proving quick to learn from experience, but they were also proving quick in trying new ideas at a time when there were so few experiences on which to base important decisions and orders. Task Force 6814 had passed the early critical stages of its existence most successfully.

On March 28 General Patch, as commander of the headquarters newly designated as United Forces in New Caledonia, realizing the urgent need for more troops, wired the War Department requesting that he be sent an additional infantry regiment, a fully equipped and mounted cavalry regiment, and a signal intelligence company.

Soon after this, reinforcements, including some he had not specifically requested, landed in Noumea and reported to General Patch. The first arrival, on April 3, was the 97th Field Artillery Battalion, a 75mm pack howitzer unit. This unit, however, arrived practically immobilized due to the fact that the mules used to transport the howitzers and equipment were being shipped from the United States on a Dutch freighter.

On April 9 the infantry strength on the island was increased nearly fifty per cent with the arrival of the 164th Infantry Regiment, a North Dakota National Guard unit which had been separated from the 34th Infantry Division. Plans could now be made for the lightening of the load placed on the shoulders of the men of the 132d and 182d Infantry Regiments.

Four days later, on April 13, still another troop transport deposited more artillery in the form of the 72d Field Artillery Regiment, an all-

selectee, 105mm howitzer unit. This same ship also brought the 700th Signal Air Warning Company, in answer to General Patch's request.

As these new units were arriving and moving to assigned bivouacs and sectors of responsibility, the older units of the task force were undergoing a shuffling in the form of redesignations. In compliance with War Department directives and general orders issued by Headquarters United Forces in New Caledonia, on April 18 these units were changed as follows:

<i>Original Unit</i>	<i>Redesignated Unit</i>
Platoon, 26th Military Police Company	Platoon, 39th Military Police Company
180th Field Artillery Regiment (less 2d Battalion)	200th Field Artillery Regiment (less 2d Battalion)
2d Battalion, 123d Field Artillery Regiment	2d Battalion, 200th Field Artillery Regiment
1st Battalion, 108th Quartermaster Regiment	1st Battalion, 130th Quartermaster Regiment (—)
1st Battalion, 101st Engineer Combat Regiment	1st Battalion, 134th Engineer Combat Regiment

Four days after this first set of redesignations had been completed, new orders specified that the 1st Battalion, 134th Engineer Combat Regiment, was to be immediately redesignated as the 57th Engineer Combat Battalion.

The birth of the 57th Engineer Combat Battalion, through the pair of redesignations from the original 1st Battalion, 101st Engineer Combat Regiment, was found, years later, not to have been accomplished quite as the War Department desired. The original orders sent to General Patch stated that the 57th Engineer Combat Battalion was to have been "activated," while its predecessor, the 1st Battalion, 134th Engineer Combat Regiment, was to have been "concurrently disbanded." Because the 1st Battalion of the 134th was, by redesignation on April 18, a direct descendant of the 1st Battalion, 101st Engineer Regiment, the past history of the battalion of the 101st could not have been passed to the 57th Engineer Battalion. By redesignating the battalion of the 134th as the 57th Engineer Combat Battalion, General Patch was able to pass to the new unit its background, its past history, and its World War I record as a unit of the 26th Infantry Division, the famed "Yankee" Division.

The arrival of additional combat troops in early April now brought

about changes in regimental sectors in an effort to divide the defensive burden equally among the three regiments.

The Australian forces were given control of an upper sector of the island covering the area north from a line running from Ouaco to Oubatche. The 132d Infantry took over the sector south from the Australians' boundary to a line running from Bourail to Houailou. The 182d Infantry's sector was changed to include all the territory between the Bourail-Houailou road south to a line passing from the mouth of the Ouenghi River eastward to Thio. The newly arrived 164th Infantry took over the sector between the 182d's boundary to a line from Paita to Ouinne. The southern end of the island below this line was controlled now by the Free French.

With the redesignation of the 155mm howitzer battalions now complete and with two new artillery units on the island, Task Force 6814 now had one battalion of 75mm pack howitzers, virtually immobilized without mules, one regiment of 105mm howitzers, one regiment of 155 howitzers, one battalion of 155mm guns and the seemingly ever-present borrowed British weapons still organized into provisional batteries and battalions.

Meanwhile, realizing the tactical possibilities of the Army's quarter-ton trucks—"peeps" or "jeeps"—as a means of swiftly transporting assault troops to distant parts of the island, Lt. Col. Alexander M. George, G-3 of the task force, conceived the plan of organizing just such a unit within the task force. After his basic plans were approved by General Patch, Colonel George went ahead with the task of gathering the men and equipment. Commandeering a vehicle here and a vehicle there, and collecting a volunteer force, he soon had a pseudo-organization of about six hundred officers and men and about two hundred "peeps." These he now formed into a unit of battalion strength, along cavalry lines, and officially christened it the Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron. Because of its basic means of transportation, the "peep," the new unit quickly became familiarly known as the "Peep Troop."

On April 30, after having been relieved as G-3 by Lt. Col. Bryant E. Moore, Colonel George assumed active command of the squadron. As its new commander he undertook first to organize it more efficiently and second to train it for its principal mission. Three troops, of company size, were formed within the squadron, and the ranks of these companies were partially filled with New Caledonia natives recruited from all parts of the island. Training soon began in earnest as "peeps" sped to all parts of the island's coastline and rough interior.

During early April General Patch, noting that his G-2 and G-3 sections were becoming seriously entangled in a maze of administrative paperwork, ordered an advance command post set up in the woods near La Foa, sixty miles above Noumea. Once the new command post had been installed and placed in operation, the intelligence and operations sections were better able to concentrate on tactical duties which were far more important at this time. The Noumea headquarters, in the Grand Hotel du Pacifique, remained in operation, caring for all administrative functions of the four staff sections.

To the newly organized La Foa command post came all reports of Japanese activity in the South Pacific Area. Working together, the G-2 and the G-3 sections processed all reports and issued such orders to the troops as were deemed advisable in the light of late developments.

When it became known that strong enemy forces were gathering around Rabaul, key Japanese bastion on New Britain, the entire island was placed on a 24-hour alert to meet a most serious invasion threat. Emperor Hirohito's birthday was to fall on April 29, and New Caledonia, vital link in the supply line between the United States and Australia, and an important mineral storehouse, might make a most fitting present. The Emperor's birthday came and went without incident, but the alert was not relaxed.

The U.S. Navy wasted little time in reacting to information concerning Japanese activity. In a daring air strike on May 4, planes from the USS *Yorktown* sank or damaged fifteen Japanese ships off Tulagi in the southern Solomons. The enemy was now feeling the presence of increasing U.S. power in the South Pacific.

Not long after the bold air strike at Tulagi, a Navy patrol plane, operating near the eastern tip of New Guinea, reported seeing a large and powerful fleet of enemy warships and transports steaming around the tip of the island in a southeasterly direction. Quickly, all available U.S. warships sped into the area as the curtain was raised on the opening scenes of the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Once contact was made with the Japanese, it was not until May 7 that the enemy was able to break away and flee from the devastating blows being administered by the United States Navy. During the bitter fight eleven Japanese ships were sent to the bottom and a dozen more were seriously damaged. But the U.S. Navy suffered too, when the old and venerable USS *Lexington*, famed aircraft carrier, sank after having been badly damaged by the enemy.

On New Caledonia, Task Force 6814 anxiously watched for reports

of the Coral Sea engagement, feeling, perhaps, that the island had been the target for this intercepted Japanese fleet. The news of the U.S. victory was most joyfully received since it meant that any immediate threat to the security of the island had passed.

The March arrival of Task Force 6814 had brought warm and friendly greetings from the French and the New Caledonians alike. They knew that the presence of U.S. troops on the island meant security from Japanese attacks. However, the continuation of this new friendship depended greatly upon the conduct of the troops and upon the diplomacy of the American commanding general and his staff. In the many subsequent conferences and negotiations which took place with the island's officials, the usually direct American methods gave way to the more delicate European tactics.

The people of New Caledonia were proud of their capable militia, in spite of the fact that the troops were poorly equipped. Because of the local pride in these forces, the French garrison was treated as an integral part of the defenses of the island.

In addition, American disrespect for the numerous and varied customs of the island could well have done a great deal toward the creation of ill feeling between the Americans and the New Caledonians. How well the officers and men of Task Force 6814 succeeded in maintaining the friendship of these people is evidenced by the fact that a ceremony is held each year in Noumea on March 12, commemorating the original landing of the task force.

It was not many weeks after the landing that General Patch's diplomacy received its acid test. Toward the end of April the island's political situation, long unstable in spite of the fact that the government was unified in its support of De Gaulle, grew worse. In the center of the unsettled conditions stood Admiral Georges d'Argenlieu, the high commissioner, and the head of a French mission sent to the island in September 1941.

Although the people of the island were resentful of the intrusion of these French "metropolitans," they were more than willing to cooperate with them out of respect for General de Gaulle. They no doubt wondered about D'Argenlieu himself. They must have wondered whether he, a French monk who had been De Gaulle's confessor and who had been commissioned in the French Navy, was qualified for the post which he now held.

Under instructions from D'Argenlieu, the members of the French mission remained aloof from most of the island's officials. It soon became

local gossip that these "metropolitans" considered themselves far superior to the colonials. Before long various members of the mission were making no secret of their contempt for the people of New Caledonia. They became more and more unpopular as a result of their requisitioning of the best of the local homes and automobiles and as a result of what the people termed reckless spending. It was plain to see that they had made a bad start in their relations with the New Caledonians.

In March 1942 a committee of five French colonials was formed for the express purpose of stirring up feeling against D'Argenlieu and his mission in the hope that they would eventually be forced to leave the island. After holding a series of secret meetings, the committee decided to wait for some act on the part of the high commissioner and his group which would be contrary to public opinion. Theirs was not a long wait.

On April 30 Governor Sautot was informed by Admiral d'Argenlieu that according to instructions received from De Gaulle he was to proceed to London as soon as possible. Noumeans, probably influenced by the New Caledonia committee, were of the opinion that Sautot's recall came about as a result of intrigue on the part of the members of the mission. However, Sautot informed the people that he would accept De Gaulle's orders and that he would leave for London as instructed.

Attempting to force General Patch to show his hand in this affair, the New Caledonia committee called on him personally in order to get his views and comments. The General steadfastly refused to take sides. He also refused the committee's request to use military communication channels to transmit messages to General de Gaulle.

When asked what steps he would take if any bloodshed were to occur during forcible attempts to prevent Sautot from being taken from the island, General Patch replied that as military commander of New Caledonia it was his duty not to allow such incidents to take place regardless of local politics. During the days which were to follow, the General and his staff never deviated from the policy of strict neutrality which he outlined in this first interview granted the committee.

On May 1, as feeling rose against D'Argenlieu and his group, the commander of the island's militia announced that he and his men were behind Sautot. The governor, realizing now that his people wanted him to remain, reversed his previous decision and informed the high commissioner that he was not willing to leave the island.

Various members of the local committee visited D'Argenlieu to stress repeatedly the fact that public opinion strongly favored Sautot's retention in office and that the French mission was not wanted on the island.

On May 4 a representative of the people, in a conference with the high commissioner, succeeded in reaching an agreement with D'Argenlieu whereby he and his group would leave the island as soon as possible. This news, apparently indicating that the mild political turmoil had come to an end, calmed the population. It proved to be a calm before the real storm.

On the following day, May 5, the anniversary of the departure of the New Caledonia Volunteers for the Middle East, four colonials, three of whom were members of the local committee, were arrested. Two were arrested at D'Argenlieu's office after having been called there for an interview. The other two were taken into custody at the Admiral's home after arriving there in response to cocktail invitations.

Later that afternoon a group of French Navy officers entered the home of Governor Sautot and promptly kidnapped him. The five prisoners were now taken aboard the French corvette *Chevreuil* a short time before it moved out to an anchorage in Noumea harbor.

The news of the arrests of the four colonials and the kidnapping of Sautot spread rapidly around the city and thence to all parts of the island. Many demonstrations were quickly organized around the Noumea area, but none reached riot stages.

On May 6 the *Chevreuil* moved out to sea with the political prisoners aboard. As it did so, a radio message was received from an Allied freighter, nearby, reporting that it was being attacked by a Japanese submarine. The freighter, incidentally, was reported to be carrying a cargo of mules for the 97th Field Artillery Battalion. Not one to turn down a battle, the captain of the *Chevreuil* radioed Admiral d'Argenlieu for permission to go after the enemy submarine. The high commissioner denied this request and ordered the ship to proceed on its originally assigned mission. Meanwhile, the Dutch ship sank as a result of the Japanese attack and its vital cargo of mules was lost.

When it became known that the corvette had left with the governor and the four colonials aboard, a general strike was called in Noumea protesting the high commissioner's acts. Word was sent to the interior for the people to come to Noumea to join in strong demonstrations against the "metropolitans." In a broadcast to the people D'Argenlieu announced that a new election would be held and that Jean Bourgeau, secretary general of the island, had been appointed acting governor in the interim.

The people reacted with kidnappings of their own. On May 8 four members of the French mission were seized and held as hostages pending the release of Sautot and the colonials. On the following day, while

attempting to address the people at La Foa, the high commissioner himself was forcibly confined to a house in that town.

When he stubbornly refused to negotiate under pressure of his confinement, D'Argenlieu was released and allowed to proceed to his home in Paita. Later on the same afternoon the four members of the mission were set free after promising to return and release Sautot and the New Caledonians as soon as possible.

During these demonstrations General Patch, still maintaining strict neutrality, stepped into the picture. Royal Australian Air Force reconnaissance reports indicated the presence of an enemy carrier force in waters not far from New Caledonia. It was felt that this force might be moving into position to deliver an attack on Noumea and its harbor area.

Because the gatherings in many parts of the city constituted a danger in the event of an aerial attack, General Patch now informed all concerned that the crowds would have to be dispersed, even if he had to order his troops into action to do so. Through the cooperation of the commander of the French militia who personally appealed to the people, the mobs scattered and the general strike was called off.

During the dispersal of the crowds, however, some ill feeling toward the U.S. forces came to light. Some colonials felt that because the order for the dispersals came from General Patch's headquarters, the General had taken sides with D'Argenlieu and the French mission. This ill feeling, which fortunately never passed the stage of mere murmuring, soon died out.

On May 17 the *Chevreuil* once again docked at Noumea and the four New Caledonians debarked and were released. It was later learned that they had been left on Wallis Island, northeast of the Fiji Islands, and that Sautot had been taken to Australia and left there to begin his journey to London.

After the return of the New Caledonians the entire affair passed quietly into history. Not long after this, Admiral d'Argenlieu and his unpopular mission left the island. Bourgeau remained in office as acting governor until September, when Henri Montchamp, a De Gaulle appointee, arrived to take over the governorship.

In time, when they could review the situation objectively, the people of the island came to hold General Patch and his men in high regard for their integrity and fairness and for the democratic manner in which they conducted themselves in those trying days.

Militarily, after the news of the U.S. victory in the Battle of the

Coral Sea, the officers and men of Task Force 6814 relaxed and breathed a sigh of relief. As the days and weeks passed, and as U.S. strength was being built up in the South Pacific, New Caledonia was becoming more and more secure.

With the safety of the island a practical certainty now, officers and men began to wonder about the future. Would they be doomed to fight the "Battle of New Caledonia" for the rest of the war? Or would they be offered the chance to play an important part in the offensive operations which were sure to come?

Signs of the future were not long in appearing.

The Birth of the Americal

IN THE FOUR MONTHS SINCE JANUARY 1942 A MARKED CHANGE had come over the strange, assorted and confused collection of orphaned units which had gathered at the New York Port of Embarkation as Task Force 6814. In this time the conglomeration of spare parts had been machined and molded into a strong, unified organization. Experiences in the race to safeguard New Caledonia had provided the impetus for the growth of the task force.

Yet, even though it could now be said that the units of the task force were bound together in a unity of purpose under a well organized headquarters, it could hardly be said that the task force, as a whole, was designed for efficient combat organizations. Looking to the future therefore, in the early days of May, the War Department prepared plans for an extensive reorganization of the Army forces on New Caledonia. Its work well done, Task Force 6814, hurriedly conceived and born of necessity, was soon to give way to the grim efficiency of modern war.

War Department plans called for the formation of a division from among units assigned to the task force. According to the troop list for the island, an infantry division could not be formed if current tables of organization were to be strictly followed. True enough, there were the required three infantry regiments which were to form the fighting backbone of the new division. But there the resemblance to a standard triangular infantry division all but ceased.

Under these circumstances, however, the War Department planning called for the activation of the division by name rather than by the more normal numerical designation. From Washington came the tentative name, "Necal" Division, taken from an early code designation for New Caledonia. Putting forth his own view on the subject of names, General Patch suggested that it be called the "Bush" Division.

Neither name seemed to meet the unwritten requirements for this unusual division's title. Feeling now that an opportunity to name the

organization should be given to the men who were to serve in it, General Patch turned to his troops for suggestions. An enlisted man in the 26th Signal Company, Pfc. David Fonesca, of Roxbury, Massachusetts, subsequently offered the name which was approved in turn by General Patch and the War Department. He voiced the opinion that the new division should be called the "Americal" Division, since it was to be formed from "*American troops on New Caledonia.*"

The activation of the Americal Division was directed in a secret letter emanating from the office of The Adjutant General in Washington on May 24, 1942. The letter listed twelve units as assigned to the Division and thirty-three as attached.

It was not until three days later, on May 27, in General Orders No. 10, Headquarters United Forces in New Caledonia, that the activation of the Americal Division was officially announced to the troops concerned. With the publication of this order, Maj. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, Jr., only recently promoted to this rank, became the Americal's first Commanding General.

Thus, without a single ceremony proclaiming the fact, there was quietly born World War II's second United States Army division to bear a name instead of a number. With this, the Americal Division also became the first United States Army division, and perhaps the only one, to be activated on foreign soil during the World War II.

The advent of the Americal did not alter the mission originally assigned General Patch and Task Force 6814. Sectors of the three infantry regiments remained unchanged, and all other troops continued with their routine daily duties. The process of activation had been a quiet one. Had it not been for the widespread publication of the orders, it might have passed completely unnoticed.

In forming the staff for the newborn division, General Patch shifted his old task force staff to the Americal. These officers then formed the first Division staff:

- Chief of Staff, Col. Edmund B. Sebree
- G-1, Col. Raymond E. S. Williamson
- G-2, Lt. Col. William D. Long
- G-3, Lt. Col. Bryant E. Moore
- G-4, Lt. Col. John W. Homewood

The previously established system of operating an advanced command post outside Noumea's administrative entanglements was still in operation at this time. However, the La Foa command post had been

closed some days before the activation of the division and a new one had been opened at Paita, eleven miles northwest of the capital.

A more detailed examination of the Division's troop list further showed that the Americal was far from being a triangular infantry division. Except for the old task force headquarters and the headquarters of the 51st Infantry Brigade, there was no division headquarters in being. In addition, there was no systematic organization of the division's artillery. There were two field artillery regiments, one armed with 105mm howitzers and one with 155mm howitzers, plus the assorted subordinate units armed with the borrowed British weapons. The Division also lacked assigned ordnance and quartermaster units since no suitable units of these types existed on the island at this time.

The list of units attached to the Division included representatives from practically every branch of the service; coast artillery, armored units, engineer aviation battalions, hospitals, and even an aviation pursuit squadron.

In spite of the bulky, unwieldy arrangement under which the Americal was now formed, the Division was ready for action. Its staff was ready for any assignment.

During all this time unit training was being carried on as well as could have been expected without a serious relaxation of the defensive vigilance required. As the island became more secure from attack, increasing attention was being turned toward the task of preparing the troops for the roles they were to play in possible offensive operations in the future. Selected men from each of the infantry regiments were trained in commando tactics by the Australians and these, in turn, trained the men of their own regiments in this hand-to-hand fighting. The artillery units concentrated on becoming proficient in the art of delivering rapid and accurate fire on targets of opportunity in direct and general support missions.

In early June, the Koumac airfield, once destroyed and abandoned, was reopened and new construction work was rushed. Plans now called for the use of this field as a base for planes operating on strikes against Japanese installations in the Solomon Islands to the northwest. On June 15 elements of the 132d Infantry moved into the area to take over defense of the airfield from the Australians, who were eventually to be entirely relieved in the north end of the island by the Illinois regiment. French troops, sent to reinforce the Australians, returned to the Noumea area for new assignments.

Airfield construction work swung again into high gear in still another

section of the island at about this same time. The increasing importance of air strikes against the Solomons to the northwest resulted in a decision to enlarge a small, secret fighter strip called Oua Tom, sixty miles from Noumea, into a field large enough to accommodate heavy bombers. All available trucks were quickly assigned to the task of rushing steel mats from dock areas in Noumea. In spite of the maintenance efforts of the Division engineers, the main route to Oua Tom from Noumea was in terrible condition, but, nevertheless, the trucks shuttled back and forth over the pitted, pockmarked roads. Before many weeks passed, bombers based at Oua Tom were blasting Japanese targets in the southern Solomons.

Separation from the main body of the old Task Force 6814 and the new Americal Division resulted in the New Hebrides garrison being seemingly forgotten. Force A, under Brig. Gen. William I. Rose, after setting up the defenses for the island of Efate, remained on the island until relieved by Marine corps and Army troops in late May. The force then moved to the island of Espiritu Santo, some two hundred miles farther north in the group, to establish a new outpost even closer to the Japanese.

Weeks later, under orders from higher headquarters, infantry and engineer troops joined forces to construct an airfield on Espiritu Santo. An airfield here would place U.S. bombers some six hundred miles from enemy-held Guadalcanal Island in the southern Solomons. Although the men lacked much of the necessary heavy equipment, the project was undertaken. Only by almost ceaseless, back-breaking work were these men able to clear a runway a mile in length and to make preparations for the arrival of B-17s of the 11th Bombardment Group.

Even after the bombers had arrived, the men continued to work on or around the airfield. Helping the ground crews service the planes prior to raids, many B-17s were filled with gasoline by means of five-gallon cans passed from man to man. Few units of Task Force 6814 and the young Americal Division worked as hard and as conscientiously as did those of General Rose's Force A.

These units, too, were the first actually to meet the Japanese. On several occasions enemy submarines surfaced off the shores of Espiritu Santo to shell the installations there. There was no heavy artillery on the island to return the fire, but fortunately the Japanese in no instance remained surfaced long enough to become aware of this. None of these attacks resulted in any casualties among the troops.

When Force A arrived on Efate in March, they came in contact for

the first time with the Australian Coast Watchers. This very important intelligence group, directed in part by Lt. Harold Bullock, RANVR, consisted of nine subordinate groups of agents scattered along the shores of strategic islands in the Solomons. Each Coast Watcher station in the Solomons was equipped with a long-range radio capable of reaching Efate, the organization's headquarters.

Reports of Japanese activities in the islands reached Efate daily and were digested and forwarded to Australia. The Coast Watchers were especially valuable in being able to report practically all Japanese naval movements. Even though these agents often lived within visual range of enemy camps and installations, and although they often depended on natives who might have been in sympathy with the Japanese, they never shirked any assignment.

General Rose and Force A played a small but important part in the operations of the Australian Coast Watchers after reaching Efate. Several times, in emergency, stations and agents in the Solomons were provided with food and clothing drawn from stockpiles built up at Force A headquarters. In addition, by arrangement with Lieutenant Bullock, volunteer personnel of the 182d Infantry actually manned one of the stations outside of the New Hebrides group.

In June, shortly after arriving on Espiritu Santo, Capt. Robert Williams and four enlisted men of the 182d's 3d Battalion boarded a small, inconspicuous schooner and sailed up into the Santa Cruz Islands, to the island of Vanikoro, less than five hundred miles from Guadalcanal. The station they established supplemented another on the island operated by the manager of the Vanikoro Timber Company. The five infantrymen maintained this station until mid-August when the tactical situation began to look more favorable for the Allies and when the importance of the station had diminished. It was found that these men kept their post in operation despite the fact that tropical fevers had plagued them almost from the start.

Back on New Caledonia, meanwhile, the activation of the Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron and the provisional artillery units, the operation of the port of Noumea and the completion of a hundred other necessary tasks had created a most serious shortage of junior officers within the Division. Therefore, in probably the first such operation outside of the continental limits of the United States since the outbreak of the war, General Patch, with War Department permission, opened an Officer Candidate School in June at Camp Stevens, Noumea. Enlisted men of all units who met the basic requirements for admission were urged

to apply. The candidates, after having been screened by their immediate commanders and interviewed by a specially appointed board of officers, were given an intensive six-week course at Camp Stevens.

Following this six-week course, surviving officer candidates were assigned to units in the field for additional training and for observation by officers under whom they were eventually to serve. During this probationary period they were, in effect, officers in the units to which they were assigned.

At the close of this final period of training all successful candidates were commissioned second lieutenants in their respective branches. Many of the nearly 385 candidates finally commissioned returned to serve in the companies or batteries in which they once had been enlisted men.

In early July, under directives issued by the Division G-3's office, the 132d Infantry completed plans for the first in a series of full-scale combat problems designed to test the efficiency of the infantrymen. In order to maintain as many men as possible on the primary defense missions, the exercises were limited to battalion level. The first of these exercises, to be carried out by the 2d Battalion, 132d Infantry, was scheduled for the first week in July.

However, in a seemingly increasing tempo, Japanese aircraft were now being detected off the shores of New Caledonia. The intentions of the Japanese were still a matter of concern at the Division command post. Rather than withdraw troops from the defensive positions and gather them in any strength in one confined area at a time when an enemy attack might materialize, the training exercises were postponed and an all-island alert called. When Japanese planes finally stopped skirting the island and when no enemy attacks took shape, the alert order was rescinded. The way was now clear to continue with the planned infantry battalion combat exercises.

Training continued in earnest throughout the remainder of the month of July. Men of all three infantry regiments fast became adept at night movements under conditions which closely approximated those of actual combat. Because of the fact that much of the future fighting might be carried to the Japanese in the Pacific jungles, small-unit tactics were especially stressed.

During this time, too, the field artillery units continued to gain in efficiency as a result of numerous service practices. All types of conduct of fire were tested, special emphasis being placed on forward observation methods most particularly applicable to artillery officers operating with advancing infantry units close to targets of opportunity.

Becoming familiar with methods of swift movements to strategic parts of the island and with moving into action without delay, the Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron and the 754th Tank Battalion spent their training days speeding purposefully around the island. All service units of the Division carried on training programs when freedom from their routine tasks permitted.

In the meantime, the Japanese continued with their offensives in other parts of the Pacific. With the conquest of the Philippines complete, the Japanese Imperial General Staff could turn its attention elsewhere.

On June 4 a strong enemy naval task force struck hard at Midway Island, and the Battle of Midway began. For two days the battle continued virtually unabated, but the Japanese were soon suffering heavily. When the enemy finally broke contact and retreated to the west from whence they had come, they could count as lost three destroyers and four aircraft carriers. In addition, they could endure damage inflicted upon three battleships, five cruisers and four transports. The United States Navy suffered the loss of the USS *Yorktown* and a destroyer. With this important victory, the safety of Midway and the Central Pacific had been assured.

While attention was being turned toward Midway, the Japanese were also on the move in the North Pacific. In the days immediately following the Central Pacific naval engagement, enemy troops invaded and secured the cold and desolate islands of Kiska and Attu in the outer Aleutians. Footsteps of the enemy were being felt on American soil closer to home. Dutch Harbor, 2,051 miles from San Francisco, was subsequently bombed by the Japanese as the enemy pressed his attacks ever closer to the West Coast of the United States.

Down in New Guinea the enemy offensive continued, too, as enemy amphibious forces strode ashore at Buna. The Japanese grip was soon to be extended to Milne Bay at the southeastern tip of New Guinea. It would seem that the Japanese were making as much headway as possible before the inevitable American counteroffensive was undertaken.

Reorganization again struck the artillery units on New Caledonia on August 9 in compliance with War Department directives. Americal Division general orders issued on this date provided for the formation of three light field artillery battalions and two medium field artillery battalions and for the concurrent disbandment of the two existing field artillery regiments. On August 15, the effective date of the change, the artillery units of the Americal Division were listed as follows:

<i>New Unit</i>	<i>Old Unit</i>
221st Field Artillery Battalion (155 mm how.)	1st Battalion, 200th Field Artillery Regiment
223d Field Artillery Battalion (155 mm how.)	2d Battalion, 200th Field Artillery Regiment
245th Field Artillery Battalion (105 mm how.)	1st Battalion, 72d Field Artillery Regiment
246th Field Artillery Battalion (105 mm how.)	2d Battalion, 72d Field Artillery Regiment
247th Field Artillery Battalion (105 mm how.)	Provisional 3d Battalion, 200th Field Artillery Regiment

The War Department directives which called for the formation of the new artillery units in the Americal failed to provide for an organic division artillery headquarters at this time. Therefore, a provisional headquarters was formed from the now surplus headquarters of the old 72d Field Artillery Regiment. Col. Clyde C. Alexander, commander of the 72d, became, in effect, the first Americal Division Artillery commander but he was followed shortly by Col. Henry C. DeMuth who took command of the artillery on September 3.

It was not until October 23 that an organic Americal Division Artillery headquarters was activated, again according to new War Department orders. Colonel DeMuth retained command for a short time after the activation of the new headquarters, but, in turn, he relinquished his command to Col. William R. Woodward on November 1.

For the most part, the days on New Caledonia passed none too quickly for the troops. Defensive missions, now dull and boring, occupied much of the men's time, and unit training, rapidly becoming routine, was on the increase. Free time for officers and men alike proved to be monotonous, especially among units manning distant, lonely outposts.

In Noumea, recreation facilities were not the least bit elaborate. Outside the city such facilities were practically non-existent. Issue movie projectors were extremely scarce and those available were shuttled from point to point where the largest number of troops could benefit by their presence.

Deer were plentiful in all parts of the island and, as a result, hunting early became one of the leading sports for men off duty. However, it was not long until orders were issued prohibiting the firing of small arms except in self-defense. This order succeeded in curtailing hunting almost completely at first, until ingenious soldiers found a loophole in the regu-

lations. In time it was often reported that lone soldiers and far-away outposts had been "attacked" by some very aggressive deer. Neither willing to risk bodily injury by these "attackers" nor to force the lonely outposts to suffer the loss of key personnel in these actions, the men seemed required to slay the deer. And since it seemed a shame to merely bury the dead "aggressors," feasts of venison were often enjoyed by the brave defenders of New Caledonia.

Fishing also offered diversion for the men when equipment was available and when boats could be borrowed or hired from military or civilian sources. The quiet bays and inner channels held many tasty fish. Men who proved themselves good fishermen were often assigned the job of providing sea food as a supplement to the monotonous Army rations.

Squadron upon squadron of strong New Caledonia mosquitoes, feeding as never before, flourished in the climate of the Dumbea-Tontouta area and became the subjects of many an unverified tale. Air Force records fail to substantiate the report that one rather large mosquito buzzed the tower at the Tontouta airfield, landed when permission was flashed to him, and took on fifty gallons of gasoline before ground crews realized their error. In spite of the many thousands, and perhaps millions, of these insects on New Caledonia, no *Anopheles* (malaria-bearing) mosquitoes were to be found.

The island's natives, the husky, happy-go-lucky Kanakas, of mixed Polynesian and Melanesian origin, proved of interest to the men. By nature they possessed a great love for bright colors and decorations; this fact was almost continually in evidence. Many proudly displayed red or orange hair, a condition brought about by the rubbing of lime into the scalp. This practice, introduced years before as a parasite-killing measure, was still followed as a means of tribal adornment. Native costumes consisted of shirts and shorts for the men and long, loose-fitting dresses for the women. These costumes were often topped with strings of beads, bottle caps, flowers and many other brightly colored materials.

Because, when the French industrialists began mining operations many years previously, the natives could not be interested in such work, indentured laborers were brought to New Caledonia from the Tonkin area of French Indo-China. In 1941, after earlier addition of indentured workers from Java, the combined Javanese-Tonkinese population of New Caledonia numbered some seven thousand.

Over and above these non-native workers on the island, a large number of Japanese had been brought to the island. As years passed, however, most of the Japanese bought their freedom from their employers

through hard, conscientious work and remained to work for themselves. In time, some of these ambitious Orientals had risen to positions as important shopkeepers and business men. Japanese commercial houses, too, operating from Tokyo through their countrymen on the island, had gained controlling interests in many of the key mines.

After Pearl Harbor a great majority of the nearly fifteen hundred Japanese on New Caledonia were interned by the local government and subsequently sent to Australia as a security measure. A small group of Japanese vegetable farmers was spared internment due to the fact that their products were needed in the Noumea markets. The government, however, imposed restrictions on the movements and activities of the group. Later, during serious enemy threats to the safety of the island, these restrictions were tightened almost to the point of complete internment and the Noumea vegetable market suffered a temporary collapse.

Toward the end of August situation reports reaching New Caledonia gave the Americal's existence new life and new meaning. The first offensive against the Japanese in the South Pacific had been staged, mounted and initiated. Troops of the 1st Marine Division, reinforced, had invaded the southern Solomon Islands. Gavutu, Tanambogo and Florida Islands had been captured and a strong foothold had been established on Guadalcanal where a Japanese-built airfield was now in American hands.

In spite of the excellent early progress of the Marines in the Solomons, the Japanese were reacting strongly to the bold maneuver. The enemy was bombing the Guadalcanal beachhead from the air, shelling it from the sea and attacking it from the land in an attempt to drive the invaders back into the sea. The Marines were holding, but reinforcements might be needed at any time.

Readying itself for a possible early entry into combat, the Americal underwent several key organizational changes. On September 14, Col. Earle R. Sarles, commander of the 164th Infantry, turned over his regiment to Lt. Col. Bryant E. Moore, whose post as G-3 was taken over by Lt. Col. Paul A. Gavan.

In an effort to strengthen the New Hebrides garrison against a possible Japanese jump around Guadalcanal, General Patch, on September 30, dispatched the remainder of the 3d Battalion, 182d Infantry, to Espiritu Santo. The weeks ahead in the New Hebrides were uneventful, but the entire battalion was now ready for any emergency.

During the months which had passed since the arrival of Task Force 6814 the normal rate of attrition had sapped some of the strength of the units of the Division. On September 23 the first group of replacements

requisitioned to fill the vacancies in the organizations arrived on the island. These new officers and men were welcomed with open arms and promptly assigned to units. Their training was begun almost immediately; they had much to learn and there was little time available.

Four days prior to the arrival of replacements, on September 19, the Americal underwent a full-scale command reorganization designed to streamline the Division. In accordance with orders from General Patch, the Division was broken down into a Mobile Command, a Base Command and an Air Force Command.

The Mobile Command, under recently promoted Brig. Gen. Edmund B. Sebree, consisted of all combat troops with the exception of the 70th Coast Artillery and the air units. The Base Command, headed by Brig. Gen. Raymond E. S. Williamson, also recently promoted, was composed of all service units plus the 70th Coast Artillery. The Air Force group, commanded by Col. Clyde K. Rich, included all the air combat and service units on the island.

The news of this reorganization spread rapidly through the Division and with it went many comments. "This is it!" said most of the infantrymen. "Something's in the wind," agreed others. "Guadalcanal?" asked more. Something *was* in the wind, for brisk activity followed.

It was not long until shipment alerts became common with the Division. Crating and packing of equipment started suddenly in one outfit after another and went on day and night. None knew when their unit would be called.

On October 7 the 164th Infantry received its alert order and their preparations began immediately. On the following day, Provisional Battery K, 246th Field Artillery, the last artillery unit manning 25-pounders, was alerted for movement from the island.

Two days after receiving its alert order the 164th Infantry began loading on transports at the Noumea docks. When the loading of men and equipment was completed the ships moved out to anchorages in the stream, at which time Vice Adm. Robert L. Ghormley, commander of the South Pacific area, and other top military and naval commanders, accompanied by General Patch, inspected troops of the North Dakota regiment. A heartening nod of approval was given the officers and men and they were gone—gone into action.

In preparation for a special mission in connection with the operations in the Solomons, the 246th Field Artillery's Provisional Battery K loaded its men and howitzers at Noumea on October 15 and quickly sailed out of the harbor.

Other artillery quickly followed. Battery F, 244th Coast Artillery, received its alert on October 23 with instructions to be ready to load the 155mm guns two days later. An air alert on the assigned loading date postponed the operations so that the battery was not able to clear Noumea before October 28.

On October 25 Col. Howard E. Fuller, commanding officer of the 182d Infantry, departed for Espíritu Santo to take command of the ground forces there. He was succeeded by Col. Daniel W. Hogan.

Six days later the 182d Infantry, less its 3d Battalion, still in the New Hebrides, was alerted along with the 245th Field Artillery, the 1st Battalion of the 101st Medical Regiment and a number of service detachments. By the evening of November 2 the loading of these units was completed and the transports moved out to sea.

On November 6 the first elements of the 43d Infantry Division docked at Noumea to begin taking over the defenses of the island. On the following morning they were joined by the staff of the New Zealand Kiwi Division, also destined for duty on New Caledonia.

By this time it was definitely decided which units assigned or attached to the Americal Division would be taken into combat. The remaining units, which were to be left behind, were formed into the permanent Island Command under General Williamson, effective November 10.

As rapidly as troops of the 43d Infantry Division and the Kiwi Division arrived on New Caledonia to relieve them, units of the Americal were being alerted, loaded and shipped from the island. Alerts came to the 246th Field Artillery on November 15 and on November 22, to Division headquarters; the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 132d Infantry; the 247th Field Artillery, less its Battery A; the 26th Signal Company; and elements of the Division's service units.

On December 8 the last echelon of ground forces, with the exception of the 221st Field Artillery, departed from Noumea. Two days later, the 3d Battalion, 182d Infantry, left Espíritu Santo to move directly to a rendezvous with the remainder of the 182d and the Americal. By January 1, 1943, the last elements of the Americal sailed from Noumea, taking a hopeful look at the future.

The Americal Division could well be proud of the island which they had turned over to the new island command and to the U.S. and New Zealand combat troops. Despite the troublesome days during the political squabble in May, the island was now friendly and one which was solidly behind the Allied cause.

New Caledonia, greatly through the efforts of the Americal Division, was now an island dotted with strategic airfields—at Koumac, Plaine des Gaiacs, Oua Tom and Tontouta, and with many smaller emergency fields and, further, with seaplane facilities at Ile Nou. The strategic harbor of Noumea had been improved tremendously and now ranked as the principal base in the South Pacific area.

Task Force 6814, and its offspring, the Americal Division, could certainly merit a “well done” for the accomplishment of these and many more vital tasks on New Caledonia. It can reasonably be assumed, not knowing fully the Japanese intentions at the time, that the mere presence of these American troops on the island forced the enemy to turn his attention elsewhere. While fulfilling the defensive mission assigned, this group of units, this conglomeration of military odds and ends, had been organized and trained as a division which would soon be tested to the limit in the Solomons.

Baptism in the Solomons

NEARLY A THOUSAND MILES GENERALLY NORTHWEST OF NEW Caledonia and approximately six hundred miles below the Equator, close to the southern extremities of the British Solomon Islands, lies the island of Guadalcanal. The rugged terrain of the island, a hundred miles long and some thirty miles wide, is topped by a range of mountains which rises almost abruptly above its southern shores. The sandy beaches along the north coast of the island are neatly lined with row after row of coconut palms. In the interior, dense jungles blanket the valleys between the open, grass-capped ridges and knolls. Swamps dot the northern lowlands, providing countless breeding places for malaria-bearing *Anopheles* mosquitoes. By any standards this, one of the largest of the Solomon Islands, could hardly be called an inviting place.

The prewar population of this truly tropical island was limited to an uncounted number of dark-skinned natives and to a relatively few traders, coconut plantation managers and missionaries. Guadalcanal's chief commercial produce had been copra, the dried coconut meat from which coconut oil is pressed. Because the island was without any settlement of importance, it was governed from Tulagi, twenty miles across Sealark Channel to the north.

Striking deep into the southern Solomons in early 1942, the Japanese occupied Guadalcanal and the nearby islands in the N'Gela (Florida) Island group without opposition. Immediately they began to prepare air and naval bases for future operations against the Allies. On Guadalcanal's north coast, near Lunga Point, construction crews set to work on a large airfield which, when completed, would place enemy bombers within range of important targets in Allied territory to the southeast. At Tulagi, in the N'Gela group, naval-base installations were soon under construction.

This enemy thrust far to the southeast from their newly won bastion at Rabaul was viewed with alarm by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washing-

ton. During discussions which quickly followed the first broad plans for the opening counteroffensive in the Pacific were drawn up. On March 30, 1942, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a directive calling for the first counteroffensive to be launched from the South and Southwest Pacific. Because of the troop situation in the Pacific at this time, no decision was made in the directive concerning the actual designation of the assault forces.

At his headquarters in Auckland, New Zealand, Vice Adm. Robert L. Ghormley, commander of the South Pacific Area, began his planning not long after publication of the Joint Chiefs' directive. Planning was also initiated by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, commander of the Southwest Pacific Area, at his headquarters in Melbourne, Australia. Conferences between the two commanders followed at intervals in the subsequent weeks.

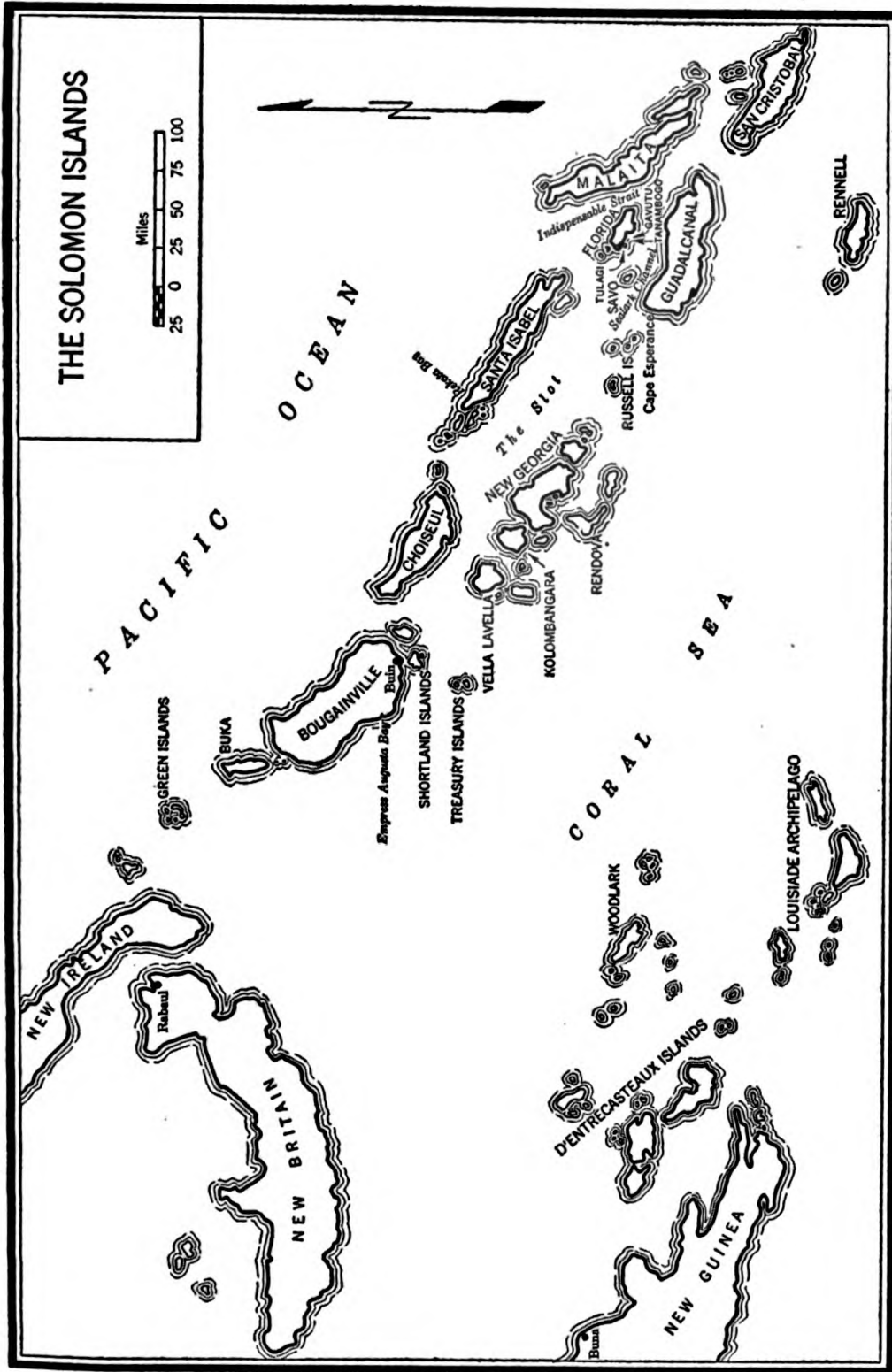
It was not until July 2 that the final go-ahead orders were received in a new directive issued by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Warning orders had been issued, however, on June 26, by the Chief of Naval Operations, and final planning had already been begun.

The new Joint Chiefs' directive called for three tasks to be accomplished as parts of the first broad offensive against the Japanese. The first task stipulated that the Santa Cruz Islands and the Tulagi area of the southern Solomons would be taken and held. The second required assaults to be made on New Guinea and in the central and northern Solomons. The third and final task—the most important—called for the invasion and capture of Rabaul, the strategically important enemy base on New Britain.

For general planning purposes, the Joint Chiefs, in their directive, established August 1 as the date on which the first phase of the opening offensive would be undertaken. This left little time for the completion of final details in South Pacific headquarters, under the jurisdiction of which the first phase was to be carried out.

In Wellington, New Zealand, Maj. Gen. A. A. Vandegrift, Commanding General of the 1st Marine Division, quickly received orders to prepare his troops for the assault. The instructions were, in turn, passed to his units, some of which were as yet en route to Wellington. As the last units of the 1st Marine Division reached Wellington they scarcely had time to unload the ships before starting to reload them tactically. Before many days had passed General Vandegrift was able to report that his division was ready.

The naval escort vessels were quickly assembled and assigned their



missions. So rapidly had the missions been assigned that some warships en route to the Pacific from the United States received orders by radio to join the task force near the target area to take up their missions.

Because the Santa Cruz Islands had not been invaded by the Japanese, this group could be by-passed. The same was true of the islands of San Cristobal and Malaita in the southern Solomons. The target area now consisted of Tulagi and the islands of the N'Gela group and the island of Guadalcanal, the same islands taken by the Japanese in early 1942.

So numerous were the tasks connected with the preparation of the attack force for the initial assault that it was soon deemed impossible to meet the Joint Chiefs' target date of August 1. When this was made known, August 7 was substituted as the Pacific's first offensive D-day.

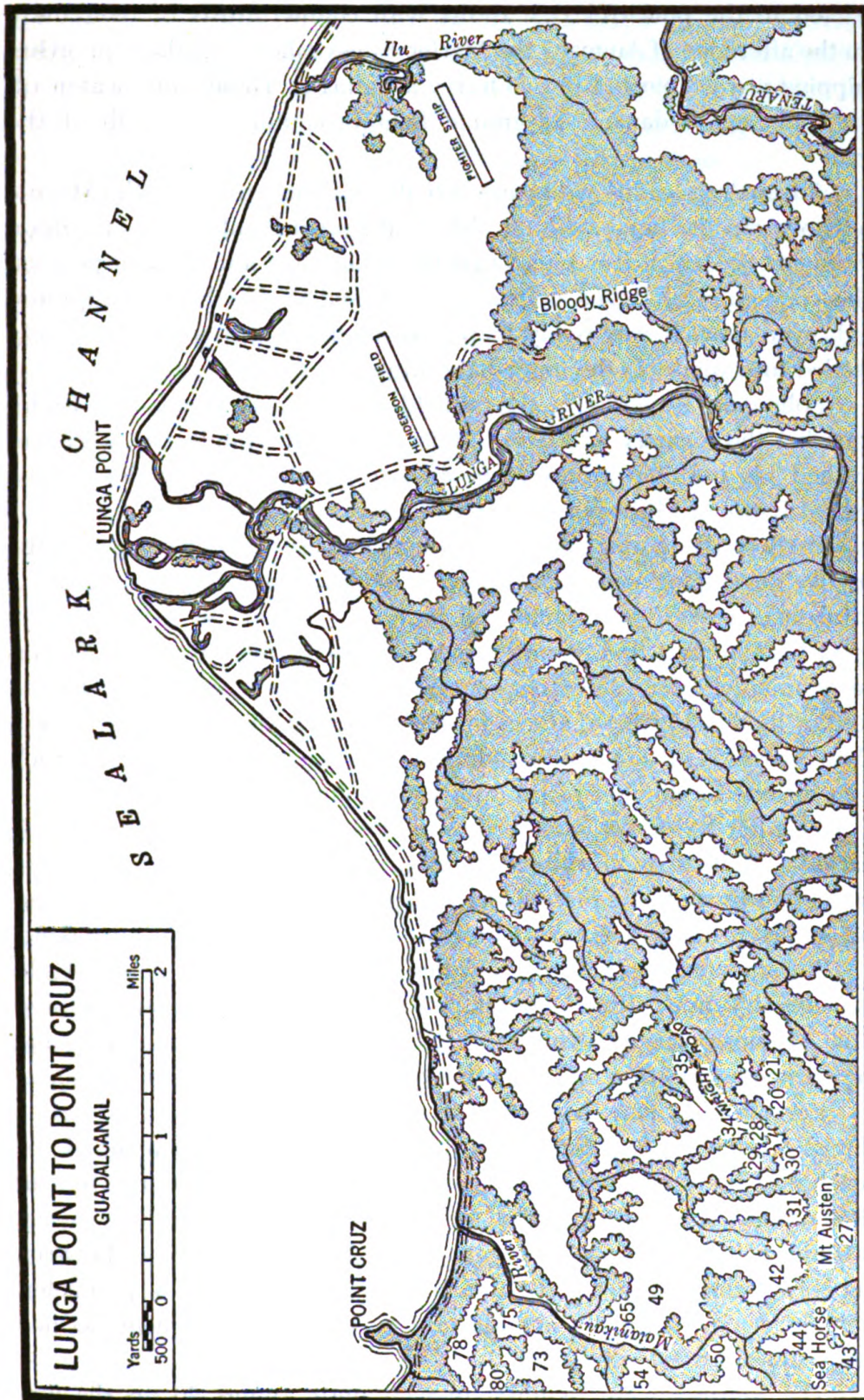
By the early part of the first week in August all was in readiness. The troops had embarked and moved out from Wellington toward the Fiji Islands. Here, after a satisfactory rehearsal had been held, all ships in the convoy rendezvoused and moved toward the Solomons. The first offensive was ready to begin.

On the morning of August 7, 1942, the convoy steamed into Indispensable Strait, between Guadalcanal and Malaita, and moved westward into Sealark Channel which separates Guadalcanal and the N'Gela group. Here the convoy split; some transports moved to positions off Lunga Point on Guadalcanal, while others steamed to positions near Florida Island. Overhead, carrier-borne planes of the combined Navy-Marine task force sped back and forth on bombing and strafing missions covering the entire sector. Warships opened fire on shore positions as the preparatory fires reached their peak.

On Guadalcanal, after the preparation fires had been lifted, troops of the 1st Marine Division, reinforced, strode ashore along the beaches between the Tenaru and Tenavatu Rivers, some four miles east of Lunga Point. Across Sealark Channel, to the north, other 1st Marine Division troops met determined resistance from the Japanese as the fight to capture Florida, Tulagi, Gavutu and Tanambogo opened with a roar. Several of these smaller islands in the N'Gela group were taken only after several days of bitter fighting.

The Japanese resistance to the landing on Guadalcanal was only slight, so slight as to be virtually ineffective. The Marines, taking advantage of this, expanded their holdings on the north shore of the island with all possible haste.

Japanese forces elsewhere in the Solomons and the South Pacific



reacted to the powerful U.S. thrust with counterthrusts of their own. On the afternoon of August 7 the Marine forces ashore and the supporting shipping were subjected to two heavy air attacks. These were beaten off with only minor damage as ground fighting continued throughout the area.

Advancing steadily westward virtually without resistance, the Marine units overran the Japanese-built airfield at Lunga Point on the afternoon of August 8. Here it was found that the timing had almost been perfect. The coral runway lacked only a few hundred feet of being completed and, even now, it was ready to receive planes which would be sorely needed for support in the immediate future.

Following its capture, the airfield was named Henderson Field, honoring the memory of Marine Major Lofton R. Henderson, who had crashed his burning fighter plane into a Japanese carrier during the critical Battle of Midway two months before.

Early on the morning of August 9 the Japanese Navy steamed into the rapidly developing campaign around Guadalcanal. At 0145 an enemy naval task force slipped unnoticed past Savo Island, off the northwest tip of Guadalcanal, and pounced upon surprised Allied warships. Within thirty minutes, four Allied cruisers and a destroyer were sent to the bottom by the Japanese, and a number of other ships were destroyed. These losses forced a temporary withdrawal of the amphibious force which then included a number of transports not completely unloaded.

This left the forces ashore unsupported, tactically or logistically. It started a grim battle to protect the most precious gains which had been made. At this stage the first offensive step forward became a most faltering one. Here a new Bataan or Corregidor might have been in the making.

A perimeter was now quickly thrown up around Henderson Field as General Vandegrift and his Marines awaited the first enemy counterblow. Reconnaissance patrols of all strengths scoured the jungles around the perimeter, meeting and engaging only scattered groups of Japanese.

For the most part, however, life on shore in the first days became almost one continuous foxhole existence. Japanese planes bombed the beachhead daily and, in addition, made offshore waters untenable for vital support shipping. At night, almost completely undisturbed, enemy battleships, cruisers and destroyers steamed down "The Slot" between the New Georgia group and Santa Isabel to pound the U.S. perimeter. Casualties mounted daily and damage to precious equipment became more and more extensive.

The Marines were required to wait until August 20 for the first

definite signs of relief. It was not until this time that a handful of Marine fighter planes and dive bombers appeared over the island, circled Henderson Field, and landed. These sorely needed planes of the 1st Marine Air Wing, the first to be based on Guadalcanal, were to play an important part in the desperate campaign which had already taken shape.

At about 0200 on the morning of August 21 Japanese ground forces on Guadalcanal struck their first blow. An enemy force of undertermined strength attempted to thrust a bridgehead across the mouth of the Ilu River, some two thousand yards east of Henderson Field. Silent enemy movements early in the battle succeeded in cutting off two Marine platoons, but these units held their ground until a counterattack, supported by mortars and artillery, could be launched.

Marine tanks growled across the sand spit at the river's mouth and poured a hail of fire into the Japanese. The attack faltered and was then withdrawn when Marine counterattacks struck at the enemy side and rear. By nightfall of August 21 the enemy assault force, estimated now to have been made with nearly a thousand troops, had been virtually annihilated.

[It is interesting to note that the action at the Ilu River was first officially known as the Battle of the Tenaru River. The names of the two rivers had accidentally been interchanged during the preparation of the Marine Corps maps of Guadalcanal. It was not until some time later that this error was actually discovered.]

On August 23 the tide began to turn slowly in favor of the Allies. A quick reaction to the discovery of a fleet of enemy warships and transports moving toward Guadalcanal precipitated the Battle of the Eastern Solomons. For two days carrier planes and planes based on Henderson Field and Espiritu Santo hammered at the persistent Japanese task force. The first major Japanese attempt to reinforce Guadalcanal was finally turned back on August 25 when the enemy broke contact and fled to the north. In the engagement the Japanese suffered the loss of a carrier.

By this time the Japanese tactics were beginning to take form. At Buin, on Bougainville, at Vella Lavella in the New Georgia group, and at Rekata Bay on Santa Isabel, the enemy had bases within easy supply range of the Japanese main bastion at Truk, and Rabaul. At these forward bases troops and supplies were being loaded on fast cruisers and destroyers. These ships, under cover of darkness, sped down The Slot to deposit their cargoes near Doma Cove and Tassafaronga, to the west of Lunga Point.

To create a diversion during these night landings, other Japanese war-ships stood off the Marine perimeter and heavily shelled Henderson Field and the U.S. installations in the area. Their evening's work done, all ships steamed back toward Bougainville and the northern Solomons, slipping out of land-based bomber range before dawn. In the days to come this method of Japanese reinforcement and supply was to become known as the "Tokyo Express."

By September 12, after a period of relative inactivity, the Japanese had completed plans for a formidable blow against the 1st Marine Division's perimeter. At least three battalions of infantry were already concealed in the dense jungle south of Lunga Ridge, a thousand yards east of the Lunga River and 2,500 yards south of the airfield. One additional battalion was poised to strike at the eastern flank of the perimeter, hoping to create some doubt as to the direction of the main effort. In preparation for the attack, enemy planes and ships continued to pound at the Marine positions by day and night.

On the night of September 13, following a particularly heavy naval bombardment, Japanese troops launched a heavy frontal assault on Lunga Ridge, held by a composite battalion made up of the 1st Marine Raider Battalion and the 1st Marine Parachute Battalion. So powerful was the assault and so determined were the Japanese that the Marine positions were penetrated at great cost to both sides before the enemy advance was halted.

In the meantime, other Japanese forces struck at the eastern edge of the perimeter, but alert Marine infantry and artillery units beat back the thrust before much damage could be done.

On the following night the Japanese, supported for a time by naval gunfire, again struck at Lunga Ridge. Driving relentlessly forward, the enemy finally forced the composite Marine battalion to yield ground some distance back to the north knoll of the ridge. Here the Marines reorganized, gathered their breaths and held while heavy concentrations of artillery fire were being brought down on the advancing enemy forces.

By the morning of September 15 the enemy pressure had been relieved and a counterattack was immediately begun. In the wake of heavy preparatory fires from mortars and artillery, the Marines drove rapidly over the bitterly contested ground and recaptured the territory once yielded to the Japanese. Casualties had been heavy in what soon became known as the Battle of Bloody Ridge, but the enemy had suffered a defeat at a most inopportune time.

On September 18 the first shipment of reinforcements and supplies

arrived on Guadalcanal, much to the relief of General Vandegrift and his beleaguered men. The transports moved into Sealark Channel despite the fact that the aircraft carrier *Wasp* and a destroyer had been torpedoed and sunk while escorting them to Guadalcanal.

Meanwhile, Japanese air attacks against the perimeter and the supply shipping continued almost without letting up. Noon of each day soon became known as "Tojo Time." One could virtually depend on the Japanese raiding the perimeter at this time if at no other time each day.

Other nicknames were soon applied to Japanese night visitors of relatively minor tactical importance. "Oscar" became the pet name for a long enemy undersea craft which surfaced evenings off Lunga Point to lazily lob a few rounds into the beach. Overhead, "Washing Machine Charlie," so dubbed because of the uneven beat of his engines, droned back and forth, dropping bombs at odd intervals to keep the troops awake. In some instances Oscar and Washing Machine Charlie inflicted damage and casualties, but for the most part they represented only a constant source of night harassment.

U.S. opposition to Japanese air raids increased steadily as more and more planes operated out of Henderson Field. By the end of September aggressive Guadalcanal-based fighter pilots had shot down 171 enemy planes in aerial combat. By this time the Army's 67th Pursuit Squadron had arrived with its P-40s—P-39s adapted for low-altitude work—to take over direct air support of ground combat on the island.

By early October the 1st Marine Division stood ready to initiate a drive westward from the mouth of the Matanikau River. The objective area was one in which the Japanese were known to be preparing artillery positions in advance of a possible full-scale attack on the Marine lines. The area, taking into consideration known enemy plans and capabilities, now ranked as strategically important ground which must be taken if past Marine gains were to be safeguarded.

The attack on the important objective area opened on the morning of October 7 as Marines thrust a bridgehead across the Matanikau and moved into the dense jungle along the west bank of the river. Japanese resistance to the American advance increased as the Marine infantrymen encountered many cleverly concealed positions. In spite of the strong enemy opposition to the drive, hundreds of yards of impressive gains were scored. On October 9, however, all troops west of the Matanikau were ordered to return to their original positions and all valuable progress was suddenly nullified.

The assault to the westward had actually gone well, perhaps better

than expected, and troops had moved far beyond the mouth of the Matanikau. When it was realized that the Japanese were most probably planning to strike around the left flank of the advancing line with a northward drive toward the sea, it became evident that the most advanced elements of the assault force were in danger of being cut off from behind. There was now no choice but to withdraw the forces to the east bank of the Matanikau and await future developments.

October was destined to become a most crucial month for General Vandegrift and his men and for the vital initiative which the U.S. forces had gained by launching this first offensive in the Pacific. Although surprised by the bold Marine landings in August, the Japanese were reacting strongly as they hurled planes, ships and men at the Guadalcanal beachhead. The Tokyo Express had replaced the men lost at the Ilu River and at Lunga Ridge and was probably adding even more troops.

On October 11 search planes operating out of Henderson Field reported seeing a force of Japanese cruisers and destroyers moving toward Guadalcanal. U.S. Navy fleet units in the area quickly moved out to engage the enemy, catching them unaware off Cape Esperance shortly before midnight. In the hard-fought battle which followed the Allied defeat near Savo Island in August was more than avenged. At least five enemy warships were sent to the bottom, at a cost of one destroyer to the attacking U.S. vessels.

The troop-strength picture on Guadalcanal brightened on October 13 when, after an uneventful voyage from New Caledonia, the Americal Division's 164th Infantry Regiment began debarking in Sealark Channel, off Lunga Point. By 1200 the debarkation was complete and Lt. Col. Bryant E. Moore, the regimental commander, gathered his troops and supplies on the beach near Kukum. These fresh, though untried, infantrymen were to prove a welcome addition to the tired Marine garrison.

Upon arrival on the island the 164th Infantry was placed under control of the commanding general, 1st Marine Division, reinforced, under whose orders they were soon to go into action. From the beach area near Kukum troops of the regiment prepared to move to assigned bivouac areas within the Marine perimeter.

Arriving on the shores of Guadalcanal at about Tojo Time, the 164th Infantry was shortly welcomed in a grim manner by the Japanese. In an enemy air raid at noon the regiment and the Americal Division suffered its first fatal combat casualty when Cpl. Kenneth S. Foubert, of Company M, was killed. During the raid, two other enlisted men were wounded by fragments from enemy bombs.

By 2300 the regiment had completed movement to its assigned bivouac area and the men started to settle down for what they hoped would be a peaceful night. It would seem, however, that the regiment had stepped into a veritable hell, for this night was destined to be one long remembered by veterans of the two months of fighting on the island.

At 0010 on October 14 a powerful enemy naval force suddenly opened fire on the perimeter, beginning what was to be a devastating three hours of heavy shelling. During the terrific bombardment the airfield, the plane dispersal areas and the front lines all received shares of the shells falling relentlessly on the island. As the enemy warships ceased fire and steamed back to the northwest, the 164th Infantry found that two more men had been killed and several more wounded.

Guided now by fires set by their naval comrades-in-arms, Japanese bombers began blasting the beachhead from the air not many minutes after the bombardment ceased. Wave after wave of bombers roared in from the sea and spread their explosive cargoes over the entire area. By daybreak the combined naval and air assault on the beachhead came to a halt.

Men warily poking their heads above ground for the first time since midnight could see little around them but damage and destruction. On Henderson Field fifty-seven planes had been destroyed or damaged and only a few barrels of aviation gasoline had been saved from the fires started by the Japanese raiders. Less than two thousand feet of the runway remained in useful condition.

Dawn had hardly broken when construction crews set to work repairing the field and the runway. Japanese heavy artillery fire soon began falling on the airfield as the enemy attempted to stop repair work. Despite the fact that they were suffering casualties in doing so, the construction crews remained on the job.

At noon Japanese fighters and bombers struck at the perimeter again as the assault began anew. A new strike was made at 1300 as additional enemy planes pounded at the beachhead and the airfield. Japanese artillery was active all the while, adding to the confusion and difficulties of the day. By mid-afternoon construction crews at Henderson Field had fallen far behind in their determined efforts to repair the field. The runway blasted full of holes, Henderson Field became inoperative.

Fortunately, however, a grass strip had been laid out in September about two thousand yards east of Henderson Field. This rough, short field, although a sea of mud and water, was solid enough for emergency

use. In the days to come this field was to be the base for all Henderson Field aircraft left in operational condition.

The Tokyo Express switched to daylight operation, running faster than ever on this grim day as Australian Coast Watchers reported seeing many ships moving "down The Slot." Two air strikes, each of less than a dozen planes, were sent to attack the Express during the day. The last strike, fueled with gasoline taken from damaged planes, succeeded in scoring damaging hits on two ships of the enemy task force.

Early in the evening of October 14 five Japanese transports boldly anchored off the beaches between Kokumbona and Tassafaronga to discharge troops and supplies. Unfortunately, U.S. airmen were forced to pass up these most tempting targets because of a lack of gasoline.

Mid-morning of October 15 found C-47s ferrying gasoline up from the New Hebrides in an effort to offset the advantages gained by the Japanese during the previous day's heavy attacks. Ground crews worked without rest repairing battered fighters and dive bombers. Construction crews sweated in determined efforts to return Henderson Field to full operating condition.

As available gasoline was pumped into planes, strikes were again sent out against warships and transports of the Express. B-17s from Espíritu Santo joined the fight as three enemy transports were set afire and a cruiser was reported damaged. Despite the mounting intensity of the U.S. counterattacks, more Japanese troops reached the Guadalcanal beaches and moved safely into the jungles.

The noticeable absence of Allied naval support following the Battle of Cape Esperance became a matter of grave concern while Japanese pressure was on the rise. In spite of the decisive U.S. victory on October 12 off Cape Esperance, Japanese submarines and aircraft were striking heavily at U.S. and Allied warships and transports. While convoying aviation gasoline to Guadalcanal, U.S. naval forces had suffered the loss of a destroyer and damage to another, and to a cruiser. These were proving to be dangerous waters in which to risk the safety of vitally needed transports and war vessels.

After the arrival of the 164th Infantry, the commanding general, 1st Marine Division, reinforced, reorganized the perimeter in order to take advantage of the freshness of the inexperienced Army infantrymen. The two months of fighting, bombing and shelling, together with the ravages of tropical diseases, had cost the Marines heavily. The 1st Marine Raider Battalion and the 1st Marine Parachute Battalion, both badly mauled by the Japanese on Lunga Ridge, had been sent from the island for rest

and reorganization. Only the 7th Marine Regiment, after a month on the island, was comparatively close to normal combat strength and efficiency.

On October 15 command of Sector Two, in the east portion of the perimeter, passed to the 164th Infantry on orders from General Vandegrift's headquarters. On that day the 1st Battalion, 164th Infantry, relieved the 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, on the left flank of the Ilu River front. On the following morning the 2d Battalion, 164th, relieved the remainder of the 2d Marines in that sector, moving in on the left flank of the 7th Marines. The 164th's 3d Battalion, assigned as 1st Marine Division reserve, moved into bivouac near the beach in the regimental sector.

Vice Adm. Robert L. Ghormley, commander of the South Pacific Area, was replaced by Vice Adm. William F. Halsey on October 18. Admiral Halsey was to carry operations in the South Pacific through to their conclusion.

Meanwhile, enemy blows against the perimeter continued from land, sea and air. Night naval shellings came almost on schedule. The tempo of daily air raids seemed to remain constant. Enemy artillery pounded the perimeter intermittently.

In the air, however, Marine fighter planes were making the daily Japanese raids most costly. On October 23, reaching a new height of efficiency, Guadalcanal's planes shot down 22 enemy aircraft out of a group of 16 bombers and 25 fighters, accomplishing this without a loss among the 24 defending Wildcats.

Shortly before nightfall on October 21 Marine positions along the east bank of the Matanikau River were suddenly subjected to an intense bombardment by Japanese artillery in position to the west. As the fire lifted, a column of enemy tanks—the first seen in the campaign—was seen heading eastward across the sand spit at the mouth of the river. Marine antitank crews went into action and quickly halted the lead tank. Marine artillery joined in to smother the remaining tanks with heavy concentrations of fire. Sensing the situation as hopeless, the enemy armor withdrew to cover and the attack ceased as quickly as it had begun.

Two days later, on October 23, General Vandegrift withdrew the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, from the southeast sector of the perimeter and ordered it into positions in the Matanikau area. This change left the 1st Battalion of the 7th Marines covering a two-battalion sector. The southeast zone of the perimeter was considered a dangerous one due to its proximity to the airfield, but the withdrawal of the battalion was made only after extensive patrolling resulted in no contacts being made in the Lunga River area.

At 1800, shortly after the change had been made, the Japanese once again attempted to force a bridgehead across the mouth of the Matanikau. A red parachute flare signalled the opening of an intensive ten-minute artillery preparation covering Marine posts along the east bank of the river. Once more, as the preparatory fires lifted, a dozen enemy tanks dashed for the sand spit. The first tank burst through the wire entanglements, headed out onto the beach and sped along the Marines' right flank. This flanking effort was brought to a halt by a Marine who left his foxhole and poked a hand grenade into the tracks as the tank went hurriedly past his position.

Meanwhile, antitank guns went back into action. One by one the Japanese armored vehicles were brought to a halt. Mortar and artillery fire, previously registered in the area, then rained down on the damaged tanks. Before long the entire tank column was a mass of blazing hulks.

Behind the tanks wave after wave of Japanese infantrymen attempted to storm across the river, only to be cut down by Marine machine guns and rifles. The attack continued in full force until the enemy strength was almost completely exhausted. By morning few survivors of two attacking Japanese battalions remained to say what might have gone wrong with their plans.

On October 24 the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, occupied positions covering the left flank and rear of the Matanikau lines. These positions were located on a ridge facing south, forming a natural, continuous extension of the lines along the river bank. All was quiet in this sector until after dark.

Then, without warning, four enemy battalions struck hard at the ridge in an attempt to turn the flank and drive a wedge behind the east bank of the Matanikau. Fierce fighting continued through the night, but the Marines held fast. At dawn on the morning of October 25, some withdrawing enemy units were exposed in the grassy ravines below the crest of the ridge. Seizing this opportunity to inflict further casualties on the enemy, all available fire was placed on the Japanese force. A counter-attack, launched shortly after this, forced other enemy troops to withdraw in complete disorder.

Back in the southeast sector on the night of October 24, other Japanese forces attacked in strength in the supposedly quiet zone of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, just south of Henderson Field. Marines countered with mortar and artillery fire in an effort to hold their ground. Without delay two platoons from Company G and one from Company E, 164th Infantry, moved into the 7th Marines' sector as on-the-spot reinforce-

ments while the regimental commander of the 164th alerted his 3d Battalion.

By 0200 on the morning of October 25 the 164th's 3d Battalion had cleared its bivouac area en route to the lines. The enemy was now attacking on a narrow front, hoping perhaps to breach the lines by a concentration of assault troops.

Rain poured down in torrents as the leading elements of the 3d Battalion were led into place by Marine guides. Attacks were spreading to the 164th's 2d Battalion. The enemy was pressing hard to gain ground. With the battalion now in position, each new enemy thrust was turned back with Japanese losses on the increase. At dawn the attack subsided and the lines were found to be intact. Attesting to the fury of the night's action, an examination showed that men from the 164th Infantry and the 7th Marines were thrown together side by side without regard for small-unit identification in the hurried efforts to hold the lines.

During the bitter seesaw struggle in the eerie darkness Cpl. William A. Clark, of Norfolk, Nebraska, with two unidentified companions, crawled forward to recover a pair of damaged light machine guns, the crews of which had been trapped and killed. Inching toward the enemy under heavy fire that took the lives of both his comrades, Clark reached the weapons safely but found himself some fifteen feet from the Japanese. Despite the fact that he became the target for almost direct mortar, machine-gun and rifle fire, he dragged both guns back to his position, dismantled them in the darkness and, using the best parts of both, re-assembled one. Hastily placing the "new" machine gun in action, Clark helped stem the tide as it began to sweep over the North Dakotans and the Marines.

In support of the night's hectic fighting Sgt. Joe Otmar, of Mayville, North Dakota, hustled his 60mm mortar crew into positions near the lines. Within a short time, however, intense enemy counter fire had killed one of Otmar's men and had wounded all of the others, leaving the Sergeant as the section's sole active member. Rather than report his mortar out of action, Otmar rose to the occasion and manned the weapon alone. By dawn, when the action had died down, the exhausted crew chief had personally fired more than five hundred rounds and had answered every fire mission assigned to the section.

During the day of October 25 the positions of all units were reorganized in the southeast sector. The 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry, took up defenses between the 164th's 2d Battalion and the 7th Marines' 1st Battalion, with the latter unit on the right. As this was being accomplished,

patrols within the perimeter mopped up snipers and isolated groups of Japanese who had managed to infiltrate through the lines at night.

While attacks were raging in two sectors of the perimeter, the Tokyo Express had again steamed down to Guadalcanal to add to the enemy's strength on the island. After discharging their troop cargoes, the two cruisers and four destroyers moved down to positions off the perimeter to pour shells into the area. Four air strikes were aimed at these ships as they withdrew at dawn; one dive bomber reported scoring a hit on one of the cruisers.

Wave after wave of enemy aircraft soared in over the island, bombing and strafing Marine and Army positions. Japanese artillery pounded at the perimeter intermittently during the day.

Shortly after dusk on October 25 enemy artillery opened fire on front-line positions in the Henderson Field area and continued the barrage for nearly an hour. After the fire had lifted, the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 164th Infantry engaged in a number of minor skirmishes with groups of Japanese attempting to infiltrate through the lines.

Early in the morning of October 26 swarms of enemy again smashed at positions in the Marine and Army sectors near Henderson Field. The main effort was aimed now at the 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry, and at the right flank of the regiment's 2d Battalion. Companies K and L bore the brunt of the assault, with Company E sharing some of the attacks which flowed over into the 2d Battalion's zone of action.

Striking stubbornly in groups of from thirty to two hundred, a seemingly endless stream of Japanese flowed toward the lines throughout the night in a vain attempt to break through to Henderson Field. During the attack a platoon of Company G was sent into the 3d Battalion's rear area to eliminate any small groups of enemy that might have been able to pass through the lines in the heat of the battle. One company of the 3d Battalion, 2d Marines, was also sent into the sector of beleaguered Company L, whose men were turning back the most powerful enemy blows of the night.

Just before dawn several groups of Japanese succeeded in breaking through the 3d Battalion's lines and the regimental reserve line as well. Service and Antitank Companies were immediately alerted and dispatched to a secondary line protecting the final approaches to the airfield. As dawn broke, however, the enemy withdrew and the secondary line was relieved at 0930. Patrols operating behind the lines continued mopping up stray enemy snipers and unorganized groups for the remainder of the day.

On October 26 U.S. Navy search planes spotted a powerful enemy task force moving south from the Japanese Mandated Islands in the Central Pacific. Anticipating such a move, a U.S. task force under Rear Adm. Thomas C. Kinkaid was rounding the Santa Cruz Islands to intercept the enemy. Shortly thereafter the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands was precipitated. During the air and naval engagement the USS *Hornet* was sunk, reducing the number of active U.S. carriers in the Pacific to one—the again-damaged *Enterprise*. The Japanese sustained severe damage to two carriers and a battleship and lost an undetermined number of planes.

Back on Guadalcanal the Japanese, on the night of October 26, again attacked the perimeter in the Henderson Field area, hoping to force the tired Americans to withdraw. Their assaults became weaker as each new blow was decisively beaten back. By the morning of October 27, after nearly six hours of fighting, it was evident that the remnants of the attacking force had been well beaten and that there would be little more trouble in this area for at least the next few days.

With the area now secure, work details were organized to bury the 975 enemy dead found in front of Companies K and L. More than a hundred other bodies of Japanese were located and buried behind the 164th Infantry's lines.

Although exhausted by the two days of bitter fighting, men of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 164th Infantry, could report that their morale was high. They had come through their first full-scale battle with the enemy with an enviable record, one which was to become the subject of official and unofficial commendations from veteran Marines on the island. For the North Dakota regiment, however, the cost had not been slight. Listed as killed in action were 29 officers and men, while 70 more were wounded in the determined defense of their positions.

Following what became known as the Battle of Henderson Field, Japanese activity on Guadalcanal decreased for a short time. Enemy air raids, operating almost on schedule, lacked the intensity of the raids just experienced. Reconnaissance patrols outside of the perimeter reported no contacts with the Japanese.

Interrogation of top-ranking Japanese officers in September 1946 failed to clarify the enemy plan for the October attacks. General Hyakutake, commander of the Japanese 17th Army on Guadalcanal, indicated that three attacks were to have been made simultaneously and that the Matanikau thrust on October 23 had been a mistake. General Maruyama, who then commanded the Japanese 2d Division and who led

the forces in the attack south of Henderson Field, claimed, on the other hand, that the Matanikau drive was designed to turn American attention away from the defenses close to the airfield.

It is known, however, that the enemy attacks near Henderson Field were postponed for several days due to the slow progress made by the assault force in its difficult march from Point Cruz to the Lunga River area. Rations rapidly diminished during the journey and all of the supporting artillery, being carried or dragged by hand, had to be abandoned in the dense undergrowth.

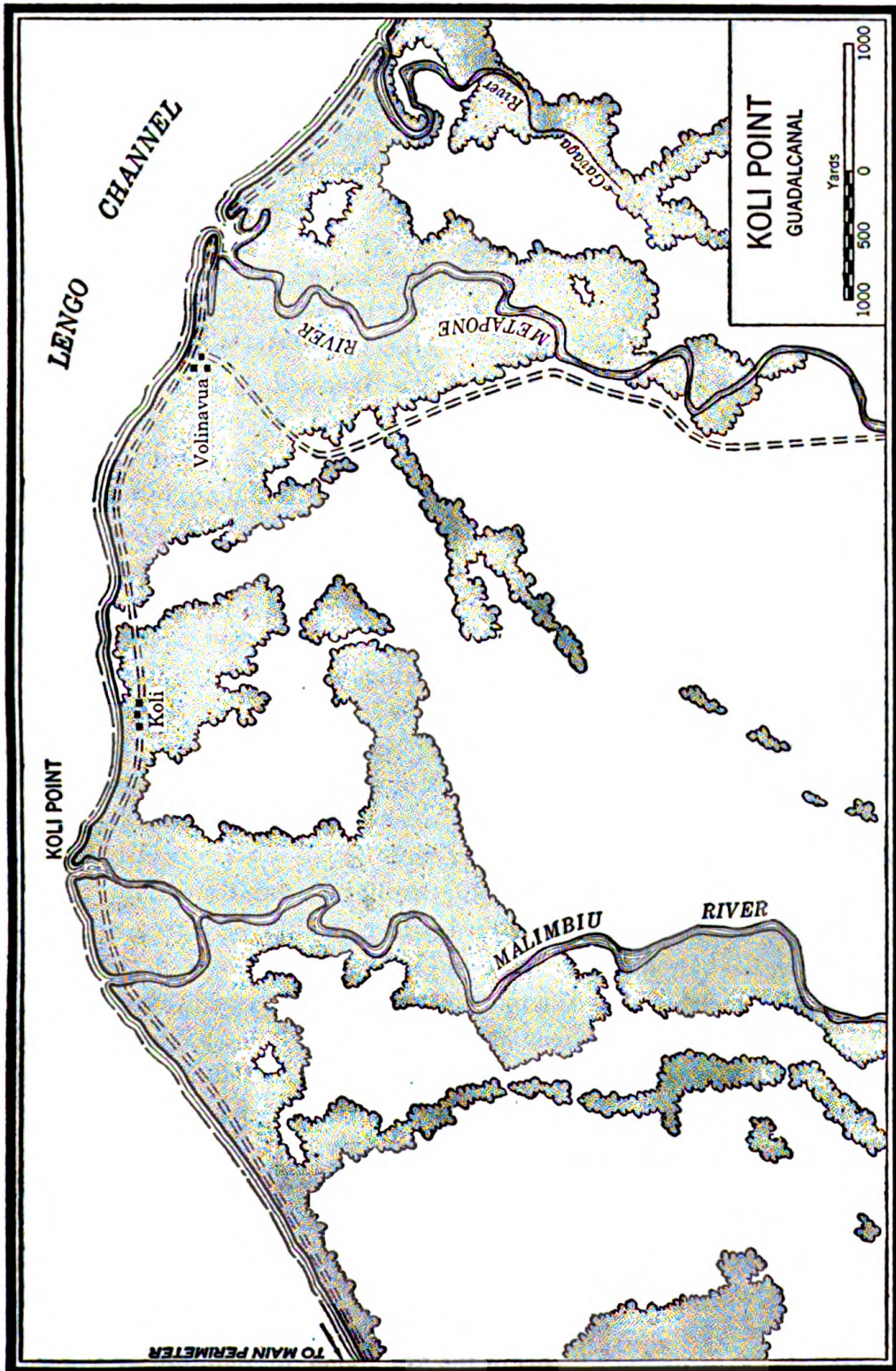
On the night of October 24 the Japanese 29th Infantry, supported by the 16th Infantry, attacked the U.S. lines in the Lunga River area, concentrating its forces on a narrow front. Three other infantry battalions, led by General Kawaguchi, were sent to strike at the perimeter from the southeast, but in the darkness of the rain-drenched jungle they became lost and eventually found themselves behind the 29th Infantry. On the following night the 29th Infantry, weakened by heavy losses on the previous night, struck the lines again, with the 16th Infantry on the right. General Kawaguchi's force was sent to the east to protect the flank and thereby failed to make contact with U.S. positions in any sizable strength.

At about this time Axis radio stations throughout the world announced that Japan had captured two important airfields in the Solomons. In Washington, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox hinted at the seriousness of the situation while newspapers compared Guadalcanal to Bataan and Corregidor. The desolate picture was brightened, however, with the reports that this most recent enemy offensive had been smashed and that all positions on Guadalcanal were still secure.

With but little pause, the 5th Marines opened a drive across the Matanikau as efforts were renewed to wrest this area from enemy control. In the meantime, elements of the 7th Marines moved to the east to Koli Point, eight miles from Lunga Point, to protect the perimeter against enemy landings in that area.

On November 2 the 1st Battalion, 164th Infantry, as yet not seriously tested in combat, was committed to action in the mounting Matanikau offensive, and by the following morning was on its way to the area.

Back at Koli Point, however, action was developing rapidly. Some-time during the late hours of November 2 or the early hours of the following morning, according to reports from the 7th Marines, a force of nearly three thousand Japanese had been landed by a section of the Tokyo Express. The presence of the enemy was first discovered by Marine



patrols on the morning of November 3, and further detailed reconnaissance was immediately made.

Without delay General Vandegrift ordered the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 164th Infantry into the area with instructions to flank the enemy positions. By 0630 on November 4 the two battalions, together with the regimental staff and elements of Headquarters Company, were en route to Koli Point. Forbidding terrain and oppressive heat made early progress difficult.

Moving first to a point far down the Malimbiu River, the two battalions then turned north late in the afternoon. Nightfall found the 2d Battalion in bivouac two thousand yards south of the beach, west of the river, with the 3d Battalion another two thousand yards farther to the south.

On the morning of November 5 the entire force regrouped and moved across the Malimbiu, following which the 3d Battalion turned north toward the coast, skirting the east bank of the river. The 2d Battalion swung about a thousand yards to the east and then turned north on the right flank of the 3d Battalion.

During the push up toward the beach both battalions encountered small groups of Japanese and either eliminated or scattered most of these. By the morning of November 7 all troops of the flanking force had closed on an assembly area at Koli Point with little to report. Pausing only for a short rest, the two battalions of the 164th Infantry now moved eastward along the shore to a point some three thousand yards east of the mouth of the Malimbiu. Here beach defenses were established in preparation for an expected Japanese landing during the night.

On the next morning, after no landing attempt had been made by the enemy, the battalions moved to another assembly area a short distance west of the mouth of the Metapone River. Upon arrival in this area the 2d Battalion of the 164th was attached to the 7th Marines as the final encircling movement was undertaken. The 3d Battalion, relieved of further action in the attacks, headed back toward the perimeter, followed by the elements of the regimental headquarters.

Driving eastward beyond the Metapone, the 2d Battalion, operating now under control of the 7th Marines, made contact with a Japanese force estimated at two battalions. Three hundred enemy were killed in the ensuing engagement before the surviving Japanese were driven inland. Swift moves during the next two days forced the enemy into a pocket located two thousand yards east of the Metapone. By nightfall of November 12, after a series of bitter fights, the remaining Japanese surrounded

in the area had either been killed or had managed to escape into the hills in small and disorganized groups.

On November 10, as a 164th Infantry patrol scoured the jungle around Koli Point, an unestimated number of Japanese opened fire on it from well hidden positions. Pvt. James R. Campbell, of Melville, North Dakota, stepped into the scrap and voluntarily covered the withdrawal of the patrol. Scattering the fire from his BAR through the undergrowth with deadly accuracy, Campbell forced the enemy to turn their attention to him. Three times his automatic rifle jammed and three times he calmly cleared it in spite of the intense fire directed at him and, as well, in spite of the fact that an enemy bullet had torn the tip from his trigger finger. Only after he was certain that all members of the patrol had withdrawn to safer ground did Campbell himself rejoin the group.

Not long after the Battle of Koli Point had begun, Brig. Gen. W. H. Rupertus (Marine Corps), in command of the operations, became ill. In his place Brig. Gen. Edmund B. Sebree, Assistant Division Commander of the Americal, took over command of the activities, retaining this command until completion of the operations on November 12.

Information obtained long after the close of the war in the Pacific brought to light some unusual aspects of this battle. According to Japanese claims, no troops were landed at Koli Point on or about November 2, nor at any time during this period. True enough, a section of the Tokyo Express was seen off Koli Point, or evidences of its presence were later discovered, but this came as a result of attempts to supply Japanese troops already in bivouac in the Koli Point area. These Japanese units were sent into hiding in this sector, awaiting further instructions, after not having been committed in strength in the Battle of Henderson Field. In addition, it was pointed out, this Japanese force numbered far less than the estimated three thousand first reported.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion, 164th Infantry, had proceeded west of the Matanikau River, joining forces with the advancing Marines. On November 1 the 5th Marines opened a determined drive westward from the mouth of the Matanikau. Several days later the 2d Marines took over the operations, reinforced now by the 164th Infantry's 1st Battalion. On November 5 the Army infantrymen relieved the 1st Battalion of the 2d Marines and occupied positions on the lines some six miles west of the Matanikau.

By November 9, in spite of determined resistance from scattered groups of Japanese, it was reported that the drive was progressing so satisfactorily that Kokumbona was now set as the next main objective.

Capture of this key coastal village would now place U.S. forces more than ten miles west of Lunga Point and would definitely relieve Japanese pressure on the main perimeter.

Two days later, however, as advance elements moved closer to Kokumbona, the drive was suddenly cancelled as it had been a month earlier, and all assault forces were ordered to return to positions east of the Mantanikau. Reports had been received to the effect that large numbers of Japanese were gathering in the upper Solomons and in Rabaul. It was felt, therefore, that the enemy was preparing to mount a new counteroffensive designed to drive the United States forces from Guadalcanal. A concentration of all available forces within the perimeter now seemed necessary to stem the tide.

The September 1946 interview with top-ranking Japanese veterans of Guadalcanal indicated that the enemy was surprised by the sudden withdrawal of U.S. forces west of the Matanikau. It would seem that this withdrawal had been a most opportune one.

Secluded deep in the hills south of the Marines' zone of operations was a powerful Japanese force, ready to move north to the coast on orders from their higher headquarters. Scouts from this force had been watching the Marine push westward and had been paying particular attention to the invitingly exposed south flank. The force itself was so hidden that it was virtually impossible to locate it in the dense jungle in the interior.

The Japanese generals surprised their interviewer by asking how the Americans discovered this force which was bent upon cutting off the Marines from behind. They had assumed at the time that the withdrawal was made in view of the threat to the south flank, but such had not been the case.

It is most probable that the U.S. command and staff officers on Guadalcanal were entirely unaware that such a threat existed in such strength. Had this fact been known at the time the Kokumbona-bound troops were scoring impressive gains in their westward drive, it is doubtful whether any serious attempts would have been made to extend U.S. control any appreciable distance beyond the mouth of the Matanikau.

•As troop units were reorganized within the perimeter, General Sebree took active command of the western sector covering lines extending from the Lunga River to the Matanikau. Assigned to his control were the 8th Marines, the 164th Infantry, and the untested 182d Infantry now en route from New Caledonia.

Marine artillery units were now grouped in positions from which

adequate supporting fires could be directed into any threatened area around the perimeter. In preparation for the vital defensive fires which would have to be laid down in the event of an attack on the lines, registrations were quickly made on critical assembly points and trails outside the perimeter.

To counter enemy naval and amphibious movements directed at the island, Admiral Halsey, the South Pacific commander, had little heavy striking power at his disposal. His strongest fleet units at this time were the battleships *Washington* and *South Dakota* and the repaired carrier *Enterprise*.

The situation was further complicated by the fact that the South Pacific commander, by virtue of his position, was not only required to thwart any Japanese attack on Guadalcanal from the sea; he was additionally charged with the responsibility of landing Marine and Army reinforcements, their equipment and supplies, and with the task of providing the warships to escort transports to the island. It was also required of him that all this be accomplished before or during the time when the Japanese would be steaming down The Slot.

Rear Adm. Richmond K. Turner, in charge of supplying Guadalcanal, had by this time developed a fairly accurate timetable of Japanese movements in the area. Based on this timetable a schedule of arrivals at Guadalcanal was established. The success of U.S. ship movements now became dependent upon the speed with which unloading operations could be carried out and upon the hope that the Japanese would do nothing unexpected.

In order to alleviate the shortage of combat units of the Navy in the area, escort vessels were attached to naval forces operating around Guadalcanal during the time when transports were being unloaded.

Enemy air activity was stepped up on November 11 when, in the first of a series of attacks, a flight of Japanese dive bombers struck a convoy of cargo vessels not far from Lunga Point. At noon on the same day high-level bombers smothered parts of Henderson Field with bombs, inflicting moderate damage among the dispersed planes.

At 0530 on November 12 another convoy dropped anchor in Sealark Channel and debarkation of the second echelon of the Americal Division began without hesitation. Arriving on Guadalcanal at this time were the 182d Infantry less its 3d Battalion; the 245th Field Artillery Battalion; Companies A and C of the 57th Engineer Combat Battalion; the 1st Battalion of the 101st Medical Regiment; plus Ordnance and Quartermaster personnel in small detachments.

During the early afternoon the unloading of cargo was interrupted by an air-raid warning order. Interceptors arose from the airfield as the cargo ships weighed anchor and moved into established antiaircraft formations in the channel.

From behind Florida Island, to the north, thirty Japanese torpedo bombers and fighters dropped almost to the surface of the water and sped toward the ships. From the air, the sea, and the shore, fire of all types was thrown at the raiders. When the firing died down twenty-six enemy planes were counted as shot down, one of which was credited to the men of Company H, 182d Infantry, who had unlimbered their machine guns to join the fight.

In the meantime, reconnaissance planes to the northwest discovered a new enemy task force moving down toward Guadalcanal. Quickly, the transports were ordered withdrawn to the southeast before dark. Later, under cover of darkness in the late hours of November 12, a U.S. naval task force steamed up to intercept the Japanese. In the engagement which shortly followed, U.S. cruisers slugged it out with Japanese battleships and actually won.

However, it was felt that the main enemy effort was yet to be made. Accordingly, the *Enterprise*, the *South Dakota*, and the *Washington* had been ordered up from Noumea. In addition, new Wildcats, SBDs, TBFs and a handful of P-38s arrived at Henderson Field on November 12 to strengthen the island's aerial garrison.

At 0830 on November 14, B-17 search planes reported an enemy convoy of a dozen transports and an equal number of warships a short distance north of New Georgia. A Japanese small advance naval force, including at least one battleship, moved on ahead of the convoy. Wave after wave of Guadalcanal-based bombers hammered at this group as the day passed. By evening eight of the troop-laden transports had been reported sunk or severely damaged.

Early on the following morning U.S. fleet units sped past Savo Island to hit the Japanese force as it moved toward Guadalcanal. After losing a battleship and suffering damage to two cruisers, the enemy began a rapid withdrawal. Four Japanese transports, however, managed to touch the shores of the island near Tassafaronga. Planes sprang on these now unprotected ships without delay. Soon each was ablaze from stem to stern as the enemy troops staggered and swam ashore as best they could under withering aerial attacks.

During what was later titled the Battle of Guadalcanal the Japanese were known to have lost twenty-eight ships of all types, while U.S. naval

losses included seven destroyers. Air and naval power, on the spot when needed, turned the tide in Allied favor and now greatly relieved the enemy pressure on this bitterly contested island.

With this latest enemy counteroffensive decisively turned back, the commanding general, 1st Marine Division, reinforced, was ready to renew operations west of the Matanikau. As before, due to the fact that all ground gained had been given up, the offensive would have to be resumed from the banks of the river. The arrival of fresh troops meant that more power could be focused on the drive.

Under the command of General Sebree, in charge of the western sector of the perimeter, the operations were to be carried out by the Americal Division's 164th and 182d Infantry Regiments and by the 8th Marines. These units were to be supported by all available artillery units, including the newly arrived 245th Field Artillery Battalion.

Nearly two weeks before, on November 4, elements of the 147th Infantry Regiment, an independent unit, landed at Aola Bay, thirty miles east of Henderson Field, with instructions to seize and hold ground on which a new airfield could be built. These troops of the 147th were supported in this operation by the Americal's Provisional Battery K, 246th Field Artillery Battalion, the last battery armed with British 25-pounders. In addition, Seabees moved in with the assault force to take over the actual construction tasks.

It was not long after the uneventful landing that the Seabees found the area entirely unsuitable for airfield construction. The force was subsequently moved by landing craft to Koli Point where work was begun on a new air strip.

As the Matanikau offensive opened, the 182d Infantry began the bridgehead phase by sending its 2d Battalion across the river on the morning of November 18. The battalion pushed westward some thousand yards to a ridge situated 1,500 yards south of the beach. Having secured the first day's objective, troops of the battalion began organizing positions for the night.

During the afternoon, while positions were being prepared on the ridge, a water detail was trapped outside the lines by sudden bursts of enemy machine-gun and mortar fire at what was soon dubbed the Water Hole. One platoon from Company G sped to the aid of the detail and it, too, was pinned down by the heavy fire. Then, as surprisingly as the affair had begun, it ceased when the enemy withdrew, leaving the 182d at the Water Hole with its first ground combat casualties.

On the following morning the 1st Battalion of the 182d, preceded

by Company B, 8th Marines (attached to the 182d), moved across the Matanikau near its mouth and pushed on to the west. The troops had as an immediate objective a grassy knoll 1,500 yards southwest of Point Cruz.

During the course of the morning's advance, Company B of the 8th Marines, in the spearhead position, made contact with the Japanese near Point Cruz. Heavy enemy defensive fire halted the advance at this point, approximately a thousand yards east of the reinforced battalion's objective.

The entire 1st Battalion of the 182d Infantry followed the Marines into the area in an attempt to push on through the stubborn defenses, but it now seemed that Japanese strength was on the increase in this sector. Late in the afternoon the hostile fire became so heavy that any attempts to advance through it were abandoned for the moment. After darkness had settled over the troops the Japanese smothered the Army and Marine positions with even heavier concentrations of mortar and artillery fire.

Just as dawn broke on the morning of November 20, in the wake of an all-night pounding of the new U.S. positions, the enemy struck savagely at the left flank of the 182d's 1st Battalion. Exhausted by the night's experiences, the Massachusetts infantrymen were, at first, shaken by the ferocity of the assault now being made by the seasoned Japanese forces.

When much of the initial confusion resulting from the heavy attack had been overcome, partly through the aid of experienced officers in the area, the battalion quickly reorganized, reestablished firing lines, and held. Subsequently, supported by air attacks and artillery concentrations which smashed at the Japanese, the infantrymen counterattacked. Stubbornly, the enemy first held and then yielded as the Bay Staters drove west. Within a short time Point Cruz had been secured. Advancing infantrymen then gained possession of a narrow, bare ridge running south from Point Cruz to a juncture with the lines of the 182d's 2d Battalion. Here, rather than risk additional casualties in a further advance through the jungles and ravines beyond, the battalion halted and prepared defenses for the night.

It was most difficult to determine, on the morning of November 20, whether the Japanese were preparing a full-scale attack of their own or whether their assault on the battalion's positions was in the nature of a counterattack in defense of their own lines. Months later, this question was clarified in a captured document.

This document revealed that Company B, 8th Marines, and the 1st Battalion, 182d Infantry, had, in the midst of their drive to and beyond Point Cruz, run headlong into at least a reinforced brigade of the Japanese 2d Division. This enemy force, the document further indicated, was bent upon an all-out attack on the U.S. perimeter, following the establishment of a bridgehead across the Matanikau.

This startling information seemed to shed new light on the manner of performance of the 182d's 1st Battalion in this action. Taking into consideration the overwhelming strength of the attacking Japanese forces, what appeared, at the time, to have been an extremely poor defense turned out to have been a heroic stand in the face of tremendous odds in favor of the enemy. The battalion, although shaken by the attack, showed that it had the necessary determination in that it was able to drive this powerful enemy force back later the same day.

It was now evident to General Sebree and his staff that the two-battalion attack westward would be unable to gain ground without aid. Consequently, the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 164th Infantry were committed to positions between the two battalions of the 182d. The 164th's 1st Battalion moved in on the left of the Bay Staters' 1st Battalion, while the 3d Battalion joined the continued line farther to the left with the 182d's 2d Battalion.

In compliance with instructions received on the morning of November 21, the 164th Infantry, at about 1300, pushed off in an attack westward with the intention of straightening the center of the four-battalion line. Almost immediately after crossing the line of departure determined resistance was met. Before many minutes passed a grim battle had developed in full fury.

Mortars and artillery poured fire into the area from both sides of the lines. In one of the few instances of its kind in Americal Division combat history, the Japanese massed heavy concentrations of artillery fire on the 164th's now-halted riflemen. East of the Matanikau River supporting artillery units also felt the sting of battle as the enemy began systematic counterbattery fire missions.

During the bitter all-afternoon fight in which Company F, 182d, moved in to attempt to aid the 164th's two battalions, some local successes were scored. On the whole, however, no general progress was reported. By nightfall, when the few precious yards of ground gained became untenable, the assault troops were ordered withdrawn to their original positions.

Realizing now that no ground could be gained without the heaviest of

preparatory aerial bombardments and artillery concentrations, the entire morning of November 22 was given over to this task. Dive bombers peppered the area with bombs and bullets. When the aerial missions had been completed the cannoneers took over, pouring round after round of artillery fire into the hostile positions.

At 1200 the 164th moved out again, only to find that the merciless pounding had not broken the Japanese determination to hold fast. Heavy fire from all types of weapons smothered the North Dakotans during every attempt to move forward. As on the day before, some small gains were made. Late in the afternoon, in spite of the casualties being suffered by the two battalions, advance elements were ordered to dig in and defend the ground gained.

On the morning of November 23, however, units were ordered to withdraw three hundred yards so that artillery fire might be placed directly on the stubbornly defended network of enemy emplacements. Light and medium howitzers and guns roared in the background as artillery units attempted to pave the way for successful assaults against the strong Japanese lines. The Japanese answered this with a heavy shelling of the 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry, as this veteran battalion suffered additional casualties.

On the afternoon of November 23, when the U.S. artillery fire had lifted, the 1st and 2d Battalions, 8th Marines, passed through the lines of the Americal Division's two regiments and attacked toward an objective two hundred yards to the west. Once again the enemy reacted strongly, defiantly spitting forth a hail of small-arms, machine-gun and mortar fire at the Marines. Moving over the rugged terrain, the 8th Marines recorded small but important gains before being ordered to dig in shortly before dark.

In passing through the lines of the 164th Infantry, the 8th Marines relieved Company C and the 3d Battalion of the 164th. The relieved units now retired to 1st Marine Division reserve for a short rest and reorganization period. On the night of November 23 the 2d Battalion, 164th Infantry, took over from the 1st Battalion, 182d, on the north end of the lines. The latter relief was accomplished with such speed and with such a lack of noise and confusion that it drew praise for both units from high-ranking Army and Marine officers who witnessed it.

Following the attacks on November 23, continued attempts were made to push the lines westward, but each attempt met with extremely stubborn resistance on the part of the Japanese. Both sides soon became locked in a static battle, but aggressive patrolling on the part of Army

and Marine units and brief, heavy concentrations of artillery fire were soon inflicting increasing casualties on the enemy.

The Japanese, too, took up patrolling in the area and added numerous small-scale night attacks on Marine and Army positions. These attacks, however, proved both futile and costly to the enemy and, in time, brought about an appreciable weakening of the Japanese lines without great cost to U.S. forces in the area.

In an effort to protect the rear of the lines west of the Matanikau, the 1st Battalion, 182d Infantry, after having been relieved in the Point Cruz area, occupied positions covering the approaches to the south (left) flank of the lines from the Lunga River area. Other infantry units set up beach defenses from Point Cruz to the main perimeter to protect the north (right) flank against amphibious assaults.

In a further attempt to consolidate and protect the entire sector, Company E, 182d Infantry, on November 26, established an ambush on the west bank of the Matanikau approximately two thousand yards upstream south of the beach. Similarly, a Marine ambush was organized on high ground across the river from Company E, completing coverage of the river bed and its approaches from the south. Small security patrols operated daily from the ambushes, reporting only minor contacts with stray Japanese.

As the campaign across the Matanikau settled down to patrolling and counter-patrolling, units were relieved at intervals. On November 26 Company C, 164th Infantry, reinforced by a platoon from Company L, took over positions of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. On the following day Company A of the 164th was replaced in the line by the regiment's Antitank Company. On November 29 Company B was relieved by a mixed rifle company of the 164th while the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, turned over positions to the 164th's 3d Battalion which had been reinforced by Company A.

In an abortive attempt to reinforce the Guadalcanal garrison, the Japanese dispatched another section of the Tokyo Express from the upper Solomons on November 29. On the next morning, before daybreak, the Battle of Tassafaronga was precipitated as U.S. naval surface units intercepted the enemy task force off the island. By the early morning of December 1, after an all-day battle, the Japanese were forced to withdraw after losing nine ships and an uncounted number of troops. U.S. ships and planes hustled after the fleeing Japanese to add to the damage already inflicted.

At 1300 on December 4, troops of Company E, 182d Infantry,

observed a white man approaching their positions. Cautiously, several men went out to pick up the unarmed man and guide him to safety. Within two hours the man had been brought into the Bay Stater's positions and was ready to tell his story.

He identified himself as Dale E. Land who, until November 15, had served aboard the USS *Walke*, one of the destroyers lost during the Battle of Guadalcanal. Afloat for three days after his ship had gone down, Land came ashore near the northwest end of the island. Knowing that the U.S. perimeter lay to the east, he headed in that direction, managing to avoid being seen by any of the hundreds of Japanese through whose positions and bivouacs he had to pass. He told of having seen many lightly armed, half-starved Japanese moving toward Cape Esperance, not far from where he first came ashore.

The eighteen-year-old sailor was quickly taken to 1st Marine Division headquarters where he was treated to his first meal in many days, a hot bath, and some clean clothes. After this he was interrogated at length by Marine and Army intelligence officers. Information he was able to furnish checked closely with that already obtained by combat and reconnaissance patrols.

To the west of where he had been picked up by men of the 182d Infantry, Land disclosed, the Japanese had a number of strong positions in the deep ravines, with from two hundred to three hundred enemy in each group of positions. In many instances, he added, artillery fire was not reaching these positions, but bombing and strafing by U.S. planes was causing damage and casualties.

After all necessary interrogations had been completed, Land was evacuated from the island for a well earned rest. A stranger-than-fiction chapter in the Guadalcanal campaign came to a close.

In the meantime, patrolling continued in the stalemated sector west of the Matanikau. Brief skirmishes, mortar and artillery fire, and bombings and strafings were sapping Japanese strength. In spite of increased losses, the enemy was still extremely active. Scattered sniper and machine-gun fire added more and more names to U.S. casualty lists.

On December 8 a 182d Infantry patrol observed a group of Japanese digging positions near the headwaters of the Matanikau, approximately two thousand yards south of the left flank of the U.S. lines. Intense concentrations of mortar and artillery fire were directed at the area during the afternoon and night. On the following morning a new patrol moving into the area reported finding a group of recently abandoned positions.

United States troop strength on Guadalcanal shot upward on December 8 with the arrival of the 2d and 3d Battalions of the Americal Division's 132d Infantry. Accompanying these troops were the 247th Field Artillery Battalion less its Battery A; the 26th Signal Company; Americal Division headquarters; and additional service units. The Americal's other light artillery battalion, the 246th Field Artillery Battalion, had arrived on November 29 and had already gone into action in support of the Matanikau operations.

At 1400 on December 9 the Americal Division, under Maj. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, Jr., assumed control of all combat operations on Guadalcanal, relieving Maj. Gen. A. A. Vandegrift and his 1st Marine Division. All units of the Americal previously fighting under the control of the 1st Marine Division reverted to control of their own Division headquarters. With the major portion of all three infantry regiments, and with all three light artillery battalions on the island, the Americal now stood ready to continue with the vital first offensive started by the Marines in August 1942.

Now free of combat responsibilities on the island, the tired officers and men of the 1st Marine Division hastened preparations for their departure. They had more than earned a rest during the four months of fighting now completed.

The contagious Marine *esprit de corps* was now spreading to the men of the Americal Division who had fought beside the 1st Marine Division. As the Marines left the island, they took with them the sincere respect and admiration of all United States Army officers and men who had come in contact with them.

Theirs had been a most difficult task at a time when the United States had so little with which to work and fight in the Pacific. General Vandegrift and the officers and men of the 1st Marine Division could certainly merit a salute and a "well done" from all for having brought light to a darkened Pacific war horizon.

West to Cape Esperance

THE DEPARTURE OF THE 1ST MARINE DIVISION FROM GUADALCANAL now meant that the operations west of the Matanikau, for the moment, at least, could not be intensified. Additional troop strength would be required to exert the pressure sufficient to break the 22-day-old stalemate and initiate the drive which might bring an end to Japanese resistance on the island.

In the meantime, therefore, until adequate reinforcements could be landed and readied for action, U.S. and Japanese forces across the Matanikau would have to remain locked in a static battle. Routine patrols would have to continue probing the enemy defenses. Artillery battalions would have to carry on with systematic poundings of the sector. Planes would have to strike and strike again at key targets behind the enemy lines.

The situation, however, looked brighter than it had when the westward drive first stalled in the face of determined Japanese resistance. Patrols were reporting a noticeable weakening all along the enemy lines; the Japanese return fire was diminishing in intensity. Perhaps the fruit was nearly ripe on the vine, nearly ready to be picked.

On the morning of December 10, the first morning of Americal Division control on Guadalcanal, no changes were made along the units in position in the western sector. Scanning the situation map in his G-3's office dugout, General Patch briefed himself on the status and location of the units in this critical area.

Committing all three battalions to duty on the front, the 164th Infantry now occupied positions along a line running south from Point Cruz to the right flank of the 182d Infantry. Within the regiment, the 1st and 3d Battalions had exchanged their Companies A and I, respectively, during previous reliefs. These two rifle companies now remained under the tactical control of their foster battalions.

The 2d Battalion of the 182d Infantry, facing the Water Hole,

still occupied the high ground taken on November 18 as it held down the right of the regimental zone of action. On the left, the 1st Battalion covered the south flank of the lines from positions to the east of the Matanikau.

Linking the western sector to the main perimeter, the 2d Marines held lines which jutted to the left (east) of the 182d Infantry's zone, forming, in effect, a larger perimeter which fanned out to the limit of the westward advance.

Checking his troop list, General Patch now found that he could call upon the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 132d Infantry, veterans of two days on the island. Also available for assault duty were troops of the 1st and 3d Battalions of the non-divisional 147th Infantry, once a part of the 37th Infantry Division. Totalling his infantry units, the Americal's commander found that he had at his disposal four Army infantry regiments including ten battalions, plus the 2d and 8th Marines, rifle regiments of the 2d Marine Division. Even more troops were set to join the fight on the island. The picture, indeed, looked bright.

Switching of units in the Matanikau sector continued in an effort to grant all troops as much rest as possible after fatiguing tours of combat-patrol activity. On December 11 the 3d Battalion, 132d Infantry, relieved the 182d's Companies A and D on the south flank. On the next morning the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, took over front-line positions from both the 2d Battalion, 182d Infantry, and the 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry.

After having been relieved in the Matanikau sector, the 164th's 3d Battalion, weary from almost continuous action since the bitter Battle of Henderson Field in October, swapped positions on the main perimeter with the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, and settled down for a more quiet life of routine, generally uneventful patrolling.

In spite of the fact that their power on Guadalcanal was on the decline, the Japanese remained rather active. On the night of December 12 an undetermined number of enemy slipped through the lines close to the new Fighter Strip No. 2. Shortly afterward, a parked P-39 and a gasoline truck exploded in bursts of flame and flying debris, alerting the entire area. A subsequent examination showed that two other P-39s had been set with demolition charges which had failed to explode with the others. All attempts to locate and destroy the infiltrators proved fruitless.

The Americal Division's strength in infantry battalions reached its peak by the afternoon of December 14. On the previous day the 3d

Battalion, 182d Infantry, sailed into Sealark Channel from the New Hebrides to bring the Bay State regiment to top strength. Within twenty-four hours the 1st Battalion, 132d Infantry, joined its parent regiment to add the Division's last infantry to the Guadalcanal troop list. With the 132d's 1st Battalion came the unique Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron and Battery A of the 247th Field Artillery. Now, but for the 221st Field Artillery and rear echelons of combat and service units still on New Caledonia, the Americal had been completely moved to Guadalcanal.

After twenty-four days on the line in front of the stubborn Water Hole, the 2d Battalion, 182d Infantry, took over positions on the main perimeter from the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines. The latter unit now moved to the lines east of the Matanikau to relieve the Bay Staters' Companies B and C and its Antitank Company. This move now spread elements of the 2d Marines and the 132d Infantry along the east bank of the Matanikau, extending from the beach around to the vital south flank of the western sector.

By the evening of December 15 the 8th Marines had completed the relief of all elements of the 164th Infantry in positions south of Point Cruz. The North Dakotans now moved back inside the main perimeter for a well earned rest as the regiment's 2d Battalion was placed in Division reserve.

Increasing American power on Guadalcanal was now forcing a sharp drop in Japanese air activity in the area. Fighter planes were turning back most of the raiding enemy planes before they could reach the perimeter, while new antiaircraft artillery units on the island were accounting for most of the planes managing to break through. Bombers operating to the northwest were making shambles of Japanese key air bases. Despite all this, raids still continued, although they lacked the frequency and intensity of the earlier days.

At about this time ground targets in the vicinity of Mount Austen, to the southwest of the perimeter, were taken under heavy artillery fire as new Japanese activity was being reported. Mount Austen afforded the enemy excellent observation of the perimeter, the airfields and the roads over which troops and supplies moved to the Matanikau lines.

On December 16 the 132d Infantry was placed under the operational control of the new commander of the Matanikau sector, Col. John M. Arthur, commanding officer of the 2d Marines. Orders issued to the Illinois regiment stated that it was to occupy Mount Austen with one reinforced company from the 3d Battalion which was to be followed

later with the remainder of the battalion. Operations were to begin on the following morning.

American seizure and control of Mount Austen would deny the Japanese use of this valuable observation post. Enemy forces on this hill might imperil any large-scale offensive actions west of the Matanikau. It was felt that an increase in enemy activity around this high ground meant that the hill had been occupied by the Japanese and that they were even now watching all U.S. troop movements to their north and northwest.

While preparations were being made for the 132d's occupation of Mount Austen, patrols continued to operate from Marine-held lines south of Point Cruz. Reports from these patrols now more clearly indicated that the Japanese withdrawals were on the upswing. Positions on the outer fringe of the enemy defense in depth were being abandoned due to the heavy pressure being brought to bear by aggressive patrolling and by continuous pounding by mortars and artillery. The stalemate was slowly being reduced along the entire front.

On the morning of December 17 Company L (reinforced) of the 132d Infantry moved out from the perimeter in the direction of Mount Austen. To the rear the remainder of the 132d's 3d Battalion stood ready to follow at a moment's notice. As the leading elements of the company neared the forward slopes of the hill intensive bursts of Japanese defensive fire broke the jungle silence. From well concealed positions in the dense undergrowth came fire of all calibers from rifles, light and heavy machine guns and mortars. Halted now in attempts to push through the resistance, Company L dug in to await further developments.

Realizing the seriousness of the situation, Lt. Col. William C. Wright, commander of the 3d Battalion, hustled the rest of his battalion in action in an endeavor to reach the crest of Mount Austen without further delay. By the late afternoon the entire 3d Battalion was in position along a line marking the limit of Company L's advance.

When the remainder of the battalion was committed, it was planned to attack as soon as all troops were in position. However, the long, arduous forced march had so exhausted the riflemen that the attack could not be carried out. Consequently, the assault was postponed until the following morning, before which time a detailed reconnaissance might be made. Time was also available now for air strikes and artillery concentrations which might soften the Japanese resistance enough to allow the battalion to drive through to its objective.

Shortly after dawn on December 18, in the wake of intense aerial bombings and artillery preparatory fires, the 3d Battalion struck forward up the slopes of Mount Austen. Almost immediately the advance ground to a halt as the Japanese lashed forth with a tremendous hail of defensive fire. During the remainder of the day repeated attempts to gain ground were thrown back.

Again on the morning of December 19 a renewed battalion thrust bogged down almost as soon as it had started. The battalion commander now hurried forward to make a personal investigation into the cause for the delay and the lack of progress. While with the most forward elements of his command, fire from a well concealed Japanese machine gun trapped and mortally wounded him with a sudden burst. Several attempts were made to rescue him, but each party was forced to withdraw under relentless fire from the enemy position. Finally, late in the afternoon, a strong patrol under the regimental S-2 succeeded in reaching Colonel Wright, only to find that he had died. His body was then brought back inside the lines of his battalion.

Not wishing to attack again without further knowledge of the enemy strength and dispositions to his front, Major Louis L. Franco, the new commander of the 3d Battalion, decided to postpone attempts to advance until strong patrols could obtain the necessary information. Reconnaissance units operating to the front on December 20 returned to report that the Japanese were offering resistance from an extensive series of tightly knit positions, all well hidden in the dense tropical undergrowth.

Realizing now that the Japanese resistance was too much for the 3d Battalion to overcome alone, Col. LeRoy E. Nelson, commander of the 132d Infantry, ordered his 1st Battalion into the action. The battalion moved to positions opposite what was determined to be the enemy's right flank while the 3d Battalion shifted to the west opposite the left flank.

On December 21 action was confined to small-unit patrols which, feeling around to the front, engaged a number of similar Japanese patrols. During the day the enemy seemed to be active in attempts to determine the intentions of the Illinois regiment's two battalions.

In support of the Mount Austen operations the 57th Engineer Combat Battalion undertook construction of a supply route to the area from the main perimeter. Following reconnaissance for the most suitable routes, the actual construction began despite lack of much necessary heavy equipment. Before many days had passed the tireless engineers, often having to cope with stray Japanese snipers in addition to their

construction work, had pushed the road up and down hills and through jungles to a point behind the infantrymen.

Respecting the courage and the devotion to duty of the late commander of the 3d Battalion, the 57th Engineers named the new supply route Wright Road.

As patrol reports indicated increasing enemy activity in front of the 3d Battalion, the regimental commander ordered the 1st Battalion withdrawn from its portion of the lines. The 3d Battalion extended its lines to the left to cover some of the vacated sector.

Now, in an attempt to cut what was thought to be the main enemy supply trail into the area, the 1st Battalion was instructed to push south and west to the East-West Trail. One company from the battalion was sent forward to cut the trail while the remainder of the battalion was held in reserve on Hills 12 and 20. Unable to locate the East-West Trail in the dense jungle, forward elements of the 1st Battalion failed to report any significant early successes.

As the Mount Austen situation developed further, the Matanikau sector commander altered the basic instructions concerning the main objective of the 132d Infantry. In compliance with the new orders, the 3d Battalion began movement to positions from which an attack could be launched against Hill 31, the northernmost of the two main peaks forming Mount Austen.

On December 23 the 3d Battalion moved out along trails blazed by reconnaissance patrols, shortly meeting sharp resistance from a Japanese strongpoint at the base of the battalion's objective. Halting momentarily to gain additional knowledge of the terrain, the battalion quickly drove through the strongpoint and gained a firm foothold on the northern slopes of Hill 31. Plans were immediately drawn up for a continuation of the drive toward the crest of the hill.

In the meantime, the 1st Battalion operations designed to cut the East-West Trail were ordered abandoned as the battalion was withdrawn to positions vacated at the outset of the attack on Hill 31. In these positions the 1st Battalion was now charged with the protection of the supply route to Hill 28.

Having gained the first substantial success in the difficult Mount Austen operation, the 132d Infantry's 3d Battalion rapidly pressed forward up the slopes of Hill 31. By late afternoon, at the climax of the drive, the peak of the hill was captured and consolidated. The Japanese had now been denied this key observation post overlooking the U.S. perimeter.

Early on the morning of December 24, jumping off in full battalion force, the 3d Battalion struck southward in the direction of Hill 27. Small early gains were recorded, but subsequently determined Japanese resistance developed to the front. Soon the entire battalion was halted in the face of furious enemy counterfire. Repeated attempts to pierce the Japanese lines were turned back as the Illinois regiment's casualties mounted. Forward elements of the battalion were forced to withdraw at dusk to adjust lines for the night.

At dawn on Christmas morning the full force of the battalion was once again turned on the hostile emplacements. Throughout the day thrust after thrust failed to crack the stubbornly held Japanese positions. Another static situation was quickly developing.

When it was found that lack of observation made mortars virtually useless, troops of Company M were committed as reserve forces. Establishing positions behind the stalled line of rifle companies, the company stood ready to prevent or delay any possible enemy breakthrough during a counterattack.

Reconnaissance to the 3d Battalion front now showed that the Japanese were dug in on the forward slope of a low ridge extending the full length of the battalion sector. From cleverly concealed positions, almost perfectly camouflaged, light and heavy machine guns covered every available approach to the series of emplacements. Numerous rifle posts offered added protection for these many, mutually supporting machine guns.

Other 3d Battalion patrols, assigned flanking missions, were able to move far enough to the west to locate the left flank of the Japanese line, but the enemy's right flank remained hidden in the dense undergrowth. In additional efforts to move around the right flank in strength, the battalion extended positions a short distance to the east.

It now became apparent that the 132d Infantry could not hope for success through continued frontal assaults by the 3d Battalion. An envelopment of the Japanese right flank seemed to be the only solution to the problem of reducing the potent Japanese defenses. The exact location of the right flank had not yet been determined.

After first having been ordered into an assembly area in the draw between Hills 29 and 30, the 1st Battalion of the 132d was assigned the mission of moving generally south, locating and attacking the right flank. By nightfall of December 26 the battalion was reported in bivouac in the assigned area.

Early on the morning of December 27 the 1st Battalion moved out

through the jungles, bent upon quickly locating the flank. Almost immediately the forward elements came under heavy fire from hidden Japanese positions and the advance halted. Small reconnaissance groups inched forward in an endeavor to find a route around the opposition.

It was later learned that the battalion, in its movement through the undergrowth, had taken the wrong trail and had assembled in the draw between Hills 30 and 31 instead of in the area designated. This error placed the 1st Battalion so close to the 3d that it was practically impossible to carry out any tactical maneuvers. Because of this, the 1st Battalion was able to employ only one rifle company in the day's attack.

In an effort to continue its own attack on December 27, the 3d Battalion withdrew a short distance while heavy artillery preparatory fires smothered the area. Following in the wake of the fire, the battalion struck southward with renewed vigor, only to be halted without gains of any significance. The artillery fire, which had had little or no effect on the well prepared Japanese emplacements, was now shifted to Hill 27, to the south, in the hope that some damage might be inflicted in that area.

As the new attacks ground to a halt, patrols from the two reserve companies of the 1st Battalion moved south and west in an attempt to locate the Japanese right flank. Reports received from the patrols late in the afternoon indicated that the enemy was maintaining positions well to the south and that the right flank still remained hidden.

Meanwhile, in front of the 1st Battalion determined efforts were being made to reduce Japanese strong positions holding up the advance. A 37mm antitank gun was dismantled and carried forward by hand to assault positions of Company B in an endeavor to knock out several key pillboxes. However, before the gun could be reassembled and brought into action, an enemy counterattack forced the entire company to withdraw to more secure ground.

Moving up into the area along a covered draw one Illinois platoon was subjected, without warning, to heavy fire from machine guns and snipers located on nearly all sides of the force. The precarious situation caused a number of men to withdraw hastily. Exposing himself to the deadly enemy fire without regard to his own safety, Sgt. Peter R. Miscarello, of Chicago, voluntarily halted the confused withdrawal by talking to the men and assisted greatly in retaining, at least temporarily, the ground that had already been won at considerable cost.

Earlier the 132d's commander had requested that the 2d Battalion be returned to his control for use in the attacks on strategic Mount Austen. On the evening of December 28 he was advised that his request was

being granted and that the battalion would be available to him on December 31.

At this point, however, Col. LeRoy E. Nelson, commander of the 132d Infantry, turned over his regiment to Lt. Col. Alexander M. George, commander of the Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron. Major Harry D. Bishop now took command of the unique outfit which Colonel George had organized in New Caledonia.

On January 1, 1943, assigned the task of taking Hill 27, the 2d Battalion of the 132d Infantry moved into an assembly area some three hundred yards east of its objective. From this point the battalion was to attack westward on the following morning in conjunction with attacks to be made by the remainder of the battalion.

Meanwhile the 3d Battalion had been maintaining its lines with the aid of artillery fire which had almost continually blanketed the area between Hills 27 and 31. Prior to this time, too, the 1st Battalion had been withdrawn to its originally assigned assembly area in the draw between Hills 29 and 30.

According to plans, the 3d Battalion was to renew its attacks on the stubborn enemy lines south of Hill 31. The 1st Battalion, moving from its assembly area, was to strike generally southward toward Hill 27, attempting to maintain contact with the left flank of the 3d Battalion. The 2d Battalion was to move up the slopes of Hill 27 and capture the crest with all possible haste. Heavy concentrations of artillery fire were to cover the entire area during the night and early morning and were to shift to the draw east of Hill 43 once the attacks had been initiated.

At dawn on the morning of January 2 the all-out regimental offensive opened. The 1st Battalion, advancing in column, soon ran into determined resistance two hundred yards south of Hill 31. Leaving Company C to cope with this Japanese force, the remainder of the battalion skirted the fire fight and moved on.

Private Nathan Greese, a young soldier from Chicago, did his best to help his platoon grind out a short gain during the day's action on Hill 31. When fire from a well concealed pillbox pinned down his unit, Greese crawled forward into the open to attack the position single-handed. Killing five of the enemy with his accurate rifle fire en route to the target, the young soldier finally reached the emplacement. Thrusting several hand grenades into the opening, Greese succeeded in killing the occupants of the position and in destroying the troublesome pillbox. His mission accomplished, Greese rejoined his platoon and settled back to an afternoon of more routine fighting.

Meanwhile, the 2d Battalion moved out on schedule and groped up the slopes of Hill 27. No opposition to this battalion's advance developed, and shortly the leading elements reached the summit of the hill and began digging in. At noon, however, the Japanese, aware that the U.S. forces had swept around the flank of the Mount Austen defenses, subjected the battalion to an intense concentration of artillery and mortar fire from positions south of Hill 43.

In its own sector the 3d Battalion battled to gain ground but reported little or no success while the 1st Battalion's Company C found determined resistance opposing its advance. In the meantime, the remainder of the 1st Battalion had pushed its left flank southward close to Hill 27, not far from a juncture with the 2d Battalion.

On Hill 27 during the afternoon of January 2 the 2d Battalion completed the task of digging in and laying wire around the entire perimeter despite the fact that heavy Japanese artillery and mortar fire was inflicting many casualties on the companies. In the night which followed, the Japanese, attempting to drive the troops from the hill, made seven strong counterattacks on the newly prepared positions. Each attack was driven back as enemy losses mounted. Dawn found the perimeter intact.

After a night during which the Japanese harassed the two units with machine-gun and mortar fire, the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 132d Infantry went on the offensive once again on the morning of January 3. At the close of the previous day's operations a gap still remained between the two battalions. These new operations were designed to close the hole.

As the outer flanks executed holding attacks, thrusts were made in the center near where the inner flanks were to join. Japanese snipers who had infiltrated through the open space during the night initially made progress slow, requiring that patrols be sent out to kill or disperse the enemy. By evening the gap had been closed, although the lines in the center of the new two-battalion front were thinly held.

During the day's fighting Pfc. Glenn F. Vosburgh, of Sycamore, Illinois, three times exposed himself to Japanese small-arms and mortar fire to rescue members of his platoon who lay wounded in beaten zones of enemy automatic weapons. As he returned to his position after his last daring rescue mission the Japanese swung their fire to an adjacent unit. Vosburgh, sensing the seriousness of the situation, quickly removed his machine gun from its tripod, leaped up from his position and, firing the weapon from the hip, spread accurate automatic fire among the

trees and ridges to his front. Vosburgh's bold and aggressive action quickly silenced the enemy machine guns and subsequently enabled his own platoon to gain vitally needed ground at substantially less cost.

On the evening of January 3, therefore, the 132d Infantry was in control of both Hill 31 and Hill 27. The 3d Battalion held the former hill and extended its lines around to the left, the east and south of the hill. Joining with the 3d Battalion on its right, the 1st Battalion continued the lines south, facing to the west along the ground between Hills 31 and 27, to a point almost joining with the 2d Battalion on Hill 27. A nearly complete, elongated horseshoe had thus been thrown around the Japanese who still strongly held the key ground between these two hills.

In a new attempt to drive the enemy from this key ground, both the 1st and 3d Battalions again drove forward on the morning of January 4, hoping, at the same time, to straighten the crooked lines as much as possible. Determined enemy resistance characterized the day's fighting as gains of no more than fifty yards were scored. At dusk the forward elements dug in and waited for the Japanese to react. In the meantime Hill 27, on which the 2d Battalion was solidifying its hold, shook under an almost continuous barrage of mortar and machine-gun fire delivered from enemy positions to the west.

Having reached the assigned objectives, the 132d Infantry was now ordered to dig in and complete consolidation of the gains made. Conquest of Hills 27 and 31 now denied the Japanese observation of activities within the U.S. perimeter and, at the same time, provided General Patch's forces with a view commanding Kokumbona and the Japanese-held beaches to the northwest.

During the difficult operations which resulted in the capture of these two important hills, the Illinois men had lost 112 killed in action and 268 wounded, while 3 were listed as missing. The Japanese were known to have lost more than 500 killed, plus at least as many more probably wounded. However, there still remained a strong pocket of enemy positions between Hills 27 and 31, a group of die-hards in an area which was to become known, collectively, as the Gifu Strongpoint.

While the struggle to secure Mount Austen was reaching its climax, action in other sectors of the U.S.-held portion of Guadalcanal was generally limited to security and reconnaissance patrols. Minor clashes of some significance were reported in the sector west of the Matanikau.

During this time, too, U.S. strength on the island was gradually being built up with a view toward a final drive which would eliminate

all organized Japanese resistance on Guadalcanal. Blazing the trail for the 25th Infantry Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins, that division's 35th Infantry debarked from transports in the Channel and came ashore on December 17. On December 30 its 27th Infantry arrived and on January 4 the 161st Infantry brought up the rear of the 25th Division.

The 2d Marine Division had long been represented on the island by the 2d and 8th Marines, two of its three rifle regiments, and by the 10th Marines, its artillery regiment. The latter unit had, for some time, been actively engaged in support of Army and Marine patrols outside of the perimeter and in the Matanikau sector. The 6th Marines, the 2d Marine Division's third rifle regiment, was scheduled for an early arrival and entry into action against the Japanese.

By the end of the year, just prior to the arrival of the last elements of each of the three divisions on the island, General Patch, as commander of Guadalcanal, had at his disposal the combat equivalent of three full infantry divisions, and more than half of his troops were now seasoned veterans of jungle warfare.

Within the perimeter, in a relatively quiet sector, row on row of rough wooden crosses marked the location of the first United States military cemetery in the Solomon Islands. Here, side by side, fallen Army and Marine infantrymen, artillerymen, engineers, ordnancemen, flyers—officers and men of every branch of service—were laid to begin their last long sleep. Palm fronds, carefully placed by Americans and native attendants, covered each grave.

Here, on December 31, ushering out the grim year 1942 with a note of solemnity, memorial services were held for all who had given their lives on this island since early August. As part of the ceremonies, Army, Navy and Marine Catholic chaplains joined in the celebration of a solemn high Requiem Mass at which Major James E. Dunford, Americal Division chaplain, acted as deacon.

Within the Americal Division at the turn of the year, the 164th and 182d Infantry Regiments were concerned with routine security and reconnaissance patrols while the 132d Infantry continued its struggle to secure the Mount Austen area. With its 1st and 3d Battalions, the 164th Infantry manned lines in the western half of the main perimeter and probed the terrain to the south, holding its 2d Battalion in regimental reserve. The 182d, in Division reserve, occupied positions along the beach from the mouth of the Lunga River to the southwest.

On December 23 the 3d Battalion of the 182d had been placed under

the control of the commander of the Matanikau sector and had been signed to the Switch Position. From this point patrols were dispatched to the south and southwest to cover the rear of the 132d Infantry.

On January 1 General Patch, as island commander, began to prepare seriously for the final offensive against the Japanese. On that morning he turned over the Americal Division, which he had commanded since its activation, to Brig. Gen. Edmund B. Sebree, the Assistant Division Commander. General Patch was now free to turn all of his attention to the many intricate problems which lay ahead.

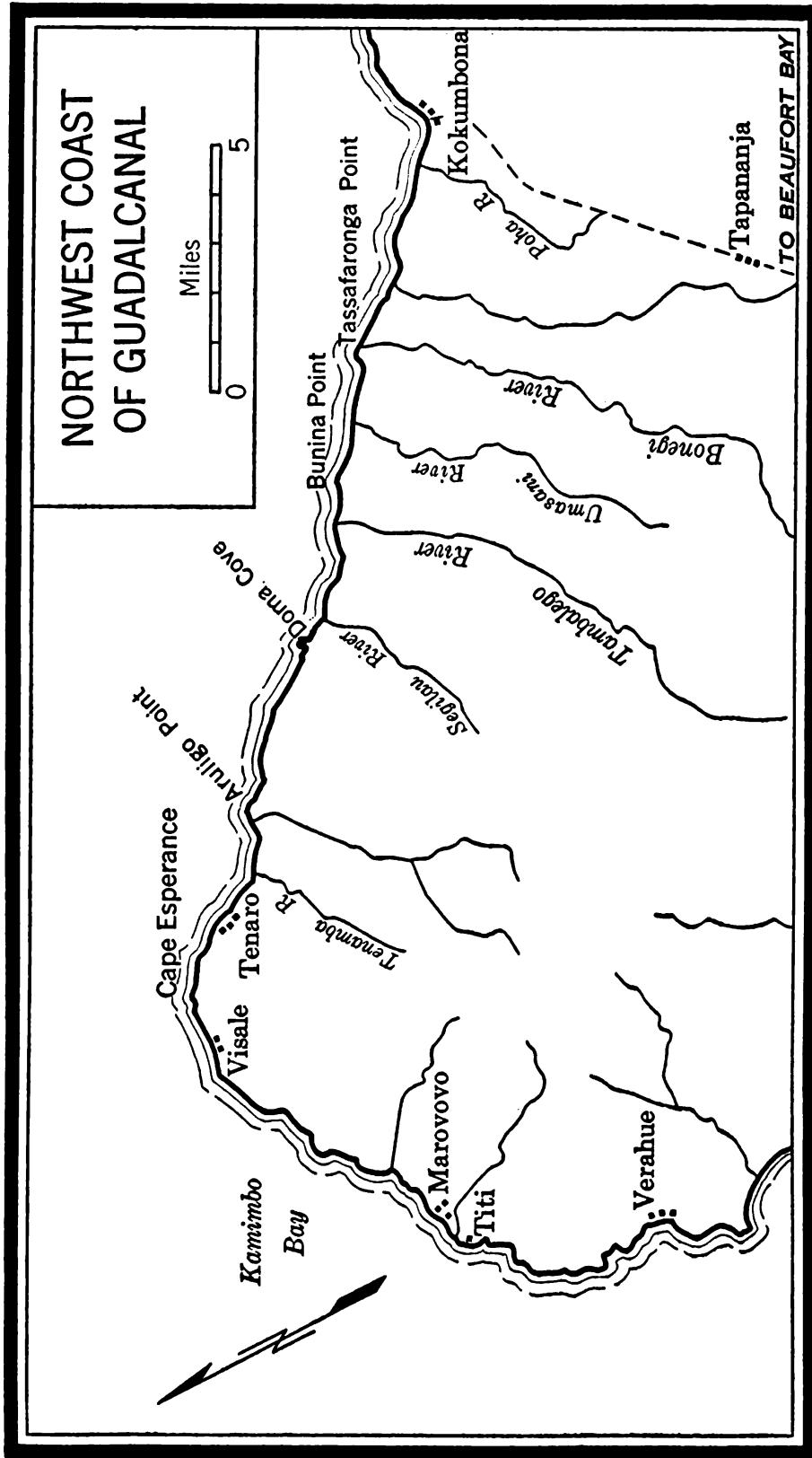
Two days later General Patch assumed command of the skeleton headquarters of the new XIV Corps. In the absence of the complete organic corps headquarters, that of the Americal Division, now long accustomed to the handling of the tactical and administrative traffic peculiar to the island situation, assumed the dual role of both Corps and Division headquarters. This unusual arrangement remained in existence for the duration of the campaign because the corps headquarters company did not arrive on the island until all ground combat had ceased.

As General Sebree moved up to become Americal Division Commander, he called upon Col. Bryant E. Moore, commanding officer of the 164th Infantry, to take over the post of Assistant Division Commander. To complete the change, Col. Paul G. Daly took command of the 164th Infantry.

By the evening of January 4 all three divisions on Guadalcanal reached peak strength when reinforcements poured ashore. To the Americal came the 221st Field Artillery and the rear echelons of all remaining units, while to the 2d Marine Division and the 25th Infantry Division came the 6th Marines and the 161st Infantry, respectively.

In the headquarters of XIV Corps plans were being completed for the forthcoming all-out drive. Since the bulk of the remaining enemy forces lay to the west and northwest, along the north coast, the drive was to be made in this direction. The virtual elimination of effective Japanese strength in the Mount Austen area practically assured General Patch that no concentrated enemy attack would be made against the south flank.

On January 6 troops of the 25th Division began moving westward into the Matanikau area in preparation for the assaults in which they, although untested in battle, were to play an important part. By 1200 on January 10 elements of the 35th Infantry completed relief of the 132d Infantry in the Mount Austen area, allowing the weary Illinois men to move back into the perimeter for a rest.



Quietly the XIV Corps offensive began on the morning of January 10. While the 132d Infantry was being relieved on Mount Austen by troops of the 25th Division, other elements of the 35th Infantry skirted to the south of Hill 27, turned west and struck at Hills 43 and 44, a pair of hills which, on a photomap, looked much like the name Sea Horse they bore. In the meantime, the 27th Infantry launched an attack southwestward from the lines below Point Cruz toward a large hill mass known as the Galloping Horse.

At the outset of the morning's thrusts, the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, and the 2d Battalion, 182d Infantry, the latter still in the Switch Position, were placed under the control of the 25th Division, to revert to perimeter defense at the discretion of the 25th's commanding general. At this same time, the 2d Marine Division, holding the lines south of Point Cruz, held fast to its lines while the 25th Division drove forward.

Sharp actions were reported by 25th Division troops as they battled to secure ground in the face of determined Japanese resistance. By January 11 the 35th Infantry had captured Hill 43 and was moving north toward Hill 44. Other troops of the 35th Infantry were striking at Gifu Strongpoint between Hills 27 and 31. On the following day, in its own sector, the 27th Infantry was able to report some success in attacks on Galloping Horse, after first having captured two preliminary objectives on the opening day of the offensive.

Action spread to the entire length of the XIV Corps line on January 13 as the 2d Marine Division launched its westward drive from the long-stalemated Point Cruz lines. On the right the 8th Marines reported small local gains while the 2d Marines, on the left, remained fixed around the extremely stubborn Water Hole first contacted by the 182d Infantry nearly two months before.

Earlier, before the opening of the offensive, Company I of the 147th Infantry had been detached from its regiment at Koli Point and had been transported around to Beaufort Bay, in southwestern Guadalcanal. From Beaufort Bay the reinforced company had marched north up over the rugged 5,000-foot mountain range to the village of Tatamoli, on the Kokumbona-Beaufort Bay Trail, some three thousand feet above sea level. Here, on January 14, the company occupied positions designed to deny the enemy use of the strategic trail as a means of evacuating troops from the north coast of the island. This move proved to have been made in vain, for the enemy made no known attempts to withdraw troops over this route.

By January 16 Hill 44 had been taken by the 35th Infantry as other

units of the 25th Division completed the conquest of Galloping Horse. Meanwhile, attacks on Gifu Strongpoint on Mount Austen continued to weaken the Japanese there almost to the breaking point. During the night of January 22-23 a strong and most determined enemy counter-attack was turned back by the 35th Infantry at great cost to the Japanese. On the following morning the 35th Infantry attacked and completely engulfed the area, bringing to an end all organized resistance in the Mount Austen sector.

In the meantime, the 6th Marines had gone into action south of Point Cruz and by January 17 had pushed the center of the 2d Marine Division's line approximately a thousand yards to the west. The left flank of the division, therefore, was still stalemated at the Water Hole despite every concerted effort to eliminate the fanatical resistance. It was not until January 21 that the enemy opposition to a U.S. advance through the Water Hole was finally overcome.

During attempts to reduce Japanese resistance in its sector the 182d Infantry suffered numerous casualties. Heroic rescues of the wounded under fire became almost commonplace, but one act of bravery by First Sgt. James J. Gaffney, of Lowell, Massachusetts, was among the most noteworthy of the period. In the midst of a heavy downpour of enemy mortar fire Gaffney sprinted some two hundred yards through the impact area to rescue an officer who proved later to have been fatally wounded. After returning to his position and leaving the officer to be treated by aid men, the Sergeant sprinted back through the barrage again to reestablish disrupted wire communications, thereby allowing operations against the Japanese to continue in full force.

Following the relief of elements of the 2d Marine Division west of the Matanikau, that division, on January 21, was temporarily redesignated the Composite Army and Marine Division and was placed under the command of Brig. Gen. Alfonse A. DeCarre, USMC. Attached to General DeCarre's control were the 6th Marines, the 182d Infantry, less its 3d Battalion, the 1st Battalion, 147th Infantry, and the 3d Battalion, 147th Infantry, less Company I.

With the Water Hole eliminated as a danger, the Composite Division began a new general advance along its entire line. By the late afternoon of January 22, in spite of ferocious enemy opposition, the seven battalions had driven some thousand yards to the west.

After capturing several key hills south and slightly west of Kokumbona at the climax of a powerful drive along the Snake, a series of narrow, winding ridges, the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, rolled into the outskirts

of Kokumbona on January 23. By mid-afternoon, after overcoming what amounted to token resistance, the small coastal village was reported secured. This successful thrust now trapped a large enemy force between the forward elements of the 25th Division and the Composite Division driving toward Kokumbona from the Point Cruz area.

Spurred on by the efforts of the 27th Infantry, Army and Marine infantrymen unleashed a sustained drive of their own against the strongly entrenched enemy between themselves and Kokumbona. Late on the afternoon of January 24, after a full day of blows and counter-blows, the first physical contact was made by the Composite Division and 25th Division troops in Kokumbona. Mopping up continued in the Composite Division sector for several days before the last remnants of the Japanese force, still resisting to the death, were wiped out.

Following the capture of Kokumbona, beach defenses were hastily organized in the event that the Japanese might attempt to land troops in the area. It soon seemed that the enemy was accepting the inevitable fact that Guadalcanal was being snatched from his grasp, for no attempts were made to beat back the American drive with new amphibious assaults.

On the morning of January 26, in compliance with instructions from the commanding general, XIV Corps, that the Japanese were to be pursued with every means available, the Composite Division passed through the 27th Infantry at Kokumbona and moved northwest up the narrow coastal flatland. Within two days, meeting and rolling back rear-guard units, the division had reached the Mamara River as units of the 27th Infantry, following in its wake, marched up to the banks of the Poha River. By the evening of the following day, January 29, elements of the Americal Division's 182d Infantry and the 6th Marines had added another thousand yards to the ground already gained.

Operating now directly under XIV Corps control, the 147th Infantry, on the morning of January 30, passed through the Composite Division's forward elements and moved on up the coast. Employing five rifle companies and one complete heavy-weapons company in the pursuit, the 147th drove forward to the Bonegi River by the next evening.

Here the situation changed sharply into a new full-scale battle. On the west bank of the Bonegi the Japanese had established a series of strong defenses which first halted the advance elements of the 147th Infantry late in the afternoon of February 1. Thrust after thrust was made against this line, but each was beaten back by the enemy. Finally, on February 5 the 147th pierced the defenses and rolled on beyond Tassafaronga Point by the afternoon of February 6.

At this point, a half-mile from the Umasani River, control of the operations passed to the Americal Division as the 161st Infantry relieved the 147th. Realizing now that the campaign could be brought to an end by a continuation of the chase, General Sebree ordered the 161st Infantry to push on toward Cape Esperance with all possible speed.

While the drive along the north coast was being initiated and while its most significant successes were being recorded, an envelopment of the enemy rear was being planned and executed. To forestall Japanese attempts to reinforce the garrison and to put an end to all organized resistance on the island as quickly as possible, it was deemed advisable to land a reinforced battalion some distance south of Cape Esperance.

The mission of this battalion was to push generally north and east around the Cape to join forces with units driving westward from Kokumbona. If halted by enemy action, the battalion was to dig in and hold until pressure could be brought to bear from the east.

In late January the initial reconnaissance was undertaken from the base at Beaufort Bay. Elements of the 147th Infantry moved out along the western shores of the island up toward Cape Esperance, while another reconnaissance group boarded a small, inconspicuous schooner to follow along offshore. The ground reconnaissance force was to move up the coast until contact was made with the Japanese, after which it was to withdraw to Bahi to confer with the group operating offshore.

Within several days the patrol had proceeded up the beaches as far as Maravovo where the initial contact was made with the Japanese. Instead of withdrawing without a fight, the patrol stepped in and slugged it out with the enemy, killing at least fifteen before pulling back.

At the bay near Bahi the schooner-borne group finally made visual contact with the patrol and made arrangements to come in through a break in the reefs to pick up the men. Shortly after the schooner dropped anchor, a native scout signaled that there were Japanese in the area. Within a matter of moments, before the patrol could be picked up, the enemy opened fire on the schooner from the hills near the beach. This sudden development forced the schooner to withdraw under heavy enemy fire and scattered the patrol into the fringes of the jungle.

Word was quickly flashed to corps headquarters at Lunga Point that it would be impossible for the reinforced battalion to land in the Bahi area, but that the beach at Verahue was clear of Japanese. By this time the battalion was already en route to the area and only a minor alteration of plans was affected.

The schooner reconnaissance force then withdrew farther south to

Nara where radio contact was made with the regrouped patrol on shore, bringing to an end a mission which had started quietly but which had erupted in a blaze of gunfire from both sides.

On the morning of February 1 the reinforced battalion, after a quick trip from Lunga Point on one APD and six LCTs, was put ashore at Verahue, ten miles southwest of Cape Esperance. Under the command of Col. Alexander M. George, commander of the 132d Infantry, the force consisted of:

- 2d Battalion, 132d Infantry
- Company M, 132d Infantry
- Antitank Company, 132d Infantry
- Detachment, Headquarters Company, 132d Infantry
- Detachment, Service Company, 132d Infantry
- Battery F, 10th Marines
- Detachment, 65th Engineer Combat Battalion
- Detachment, 101st Medical Regiment
- Detachment, 26th Signal Company

The landing itself was, as expected, unopposed, and a perimeter was quickly established around the village which was to be the initial base for the force. The escorting warships, however, did not fare as well. At 1200 a flight of Japanese bombers struck at the group. Three enemy planes were shot down by the ships' antiaircraft fire, but one destroyer was sunk by accurately placed enemy bombs.

Patrols were immediately dispatched in all directions on the afternoon of the landing, but no contacts were reported. A patrol reaching Bahi, where the 147th Infantry patrol and the schooner reconnaissance group had been fired upon and scattered, reported that all was clear in that area, four miles to the north.

On the morning of February 2 the force began its drive to Cape Esperance, knowing that at least the first four miles could be covered rapidly. By mid-afternoon forward scouts of the battalion had reached Titi, two miles above Bahi, encountering no enemy.

The 2d Battalion of the 132d remained based at Titi until February 7, sending patrols to the northeast and up into the hills above the coastal plain. Scattered strong contacts were now being made as the rear of the enemy force was being thrown into confusion.

After a night of offshore activity on the part of sections of the Tokyo Express, hundreds of collapsible boats and oil drums were seen floating in the waters off Titi on the morning of February 5. Most of the

boats and drums were found to contain supplies of food and medicine, destined for Japanese troops to the east. Rather than risk having them fall into enemy hands, the supplies were destroyed in the water or on the beaches as they were found.

Renewing the attack from the rear, the force moved out on the morning of February 7, heading around toward Cape Esperance. In a brief skirmish which followed not long after the drive began, Colonel George was wounded in action and turned over his command to Lt. Col. George F. Ferry, commanding officer of the 132d Infantry's 2d Battalion. Major H. Wirt Butler took over the 2d Battalion as the push continued on past the small pocket of Japanese.

With the support of the 75mm pack howitzers of the 10th Marines' Battery F, the battalion later drove an enemy force from the village of Maravovo where the 147th Infantry patrol had first contacted the Japanese during the preliminary reconnaissance in the late days in January. By the evening of February 7 the battalion had captured the village and had set up night defenses around it.

Meanwhile, Company G of the 132d drove on past Maravovo to butt against intense light and heavy machine-gun fire at a point two thousand yards northeast of the remainder of the 2d Battalion. Mortar and artillery fire failed to break through the tight enemy defenses before the company dug in for the night.

During the night considerable activity was noted by sound and sight along the Japanese-held portions of the shore in the distance. The Tokyo Express was apparently in the area again. At dawn the sea was full of small boats and debris of all descriptions.

The advance of the enveloping force was resumed on the morning of February 8 as scattered resistance was being offered by a few confused and half-starved Japanese. By 1700 the battalion had closed at Kamimbo Bay to conduct a reconnaissance of this area.

It was found that the Japanese had abandoned their sick and wounded in hospitals around Kamimbo Bay after first poisoning them so that they would not fall into American hands. The enemy had also left large stores of supplies and equipment scattered around the shores of the bay.

Meanwhile, fresh troops of the 161st Infantry took over the westward drive from the 147th Infantry near the Umasani River and by the evening of February 8 had driven forcefully to Doma Cove, overrunning small groups of stragglers and rear guards.

On the morning of February 9, with the jaws of the giant pincers

less than eleven miles apart, the twin drives were renewed. Both forces vigorously attacked small delaying groups to their respective fronts, rolling back ineffective defenses with little delay. It soon became evident that little or no opposition would bar the advances for the remainder of the day.

By 1600 the 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry, reached the east bank of the Tenamba River, pausing for a rest before moving on. Forty-five minutes later the spearhead of the 2d Battalion, 132d Infantry, appeared on the west bank of the river. At 1650, signalling the end of all organized resistance on Guadalcanal, the commanders of the two forces shook hands on the east bank of the Tenamba. With the entire north coast of the island now in United States hands, the conquest of Guadalcanal was complete. The first offensive step forward, so haltingly begun six months and two days before, now thumped to the soil of the Solomon Islands with a sound that was heard throughout the Pacific!

Following the successful drive around Cape Esperance, troops of the 2d Battalion, 132d Infantry, remained in the area, patrolling intensively in all directions from the mouth of the Tenamba River. Several minor clashes were reported as scattered groups of Japanese were met. A handful of prisoners was netted by the patrols and some abandoned equipment was destroyed.

As the Japanese withdrew along the coast before the relentless XIV Corps offensive, it became a matter of concern whether the enemy was evacuating to Savo Island. Consequently, under orders from corps headquarters, Company C (reinforced), 164th Infantry, under Captain William Mjogdalen, left for the island by landing craft on January 29. The company's mission was to reconnoiter the island thoroughly and to locate and destroy all enemy forces there. Three days later, after having completely covered the island without incident, the company was withdrawn to Guadalcanal.

During the corps offensive the 164th Infantry attended to routine perimeter defense duties. On January 19 the regiment's 1st Battalion was relieved on the line by the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines, to revert to a reserve role within the perimeter. On January 27, as Company C was preparing for its Savo Island mission, the 164th was placed in corps reserve, to be committed if additional power was needed in the last days of the drive.

On February 2 the 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry, was ordered into positions along the beach from the Ilu River east to Koli Point to ward off possible Japanese troop landings in this area. The battalion was

reinforced by the North Dakotans' Antitank Company while the 2d Battalion was being held in regimental reserve. On the following day, after nothing had materialized in the way of Japanese landings, the entire regiment reverted to Americal Division control.

In an effort to fill the time which now hung heavily on the 164th Infantry, a series of small-scale training problems were initiated as the 2d Battalion engaged in a short "campaign" against the 3d. Following this, security patrols in the Koli Point area became fashionable.

Once the final drive against the Japanese had been opened the 182d Infantry entered the picture in a small way against the hostile forces. On January 14 the Bay Staters' 1st Battalion was placed in XIV Corps reserve, followed two days later by the 3d Battalion. After having been relieved of perimeter defense duties by units of the 2d Marines, these infantrymen moved across the Matanikau under attachment to the 2d Marine Division. By January 17 the two battalions were in position on the Marine line between the right flank of the 25th Division, to the south, and the 6th Marines, to the north.

During the drive to Kokumbona the two battalions of the 182d met only small groups of enemy as they drove along on the left of the 2d Marine Division and the subsequently redesignated Composite Army and Marine Division. The pair of units was relieved on January 30 by the 147th Infantry as the latter began its drive westward along the coast.

After having been relieved of tactical duties in the corps drive, the regiment reverted to the control of the Commanding General, Americal Division, and returned to bivouac within the perimeter. Later, the 1st Battalion, plus Companies G and H of the 2d Battalion, occupied beach defenses near the mouth of the Lunga River. On January 31 the 3d Battalion was relieved of attachment to the 25th Division, at which time it was returned to regimental control. On February 9 the regiment was designated XIV Corps' reserve regiment and, on orders from General Patch's headquarters, moved to a bivouac area south of Henderson Field.

When the 27th Infantry had driven far beyond the positions which the Americal's Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron held on Hill 56 at the outset of the offensive, this outpost became relatively valueless. Troops of the 27th Infantry took over the hill on January 18 as the Americal's reconnaissance unit moved back into the perimeter. On the following morning, however, the Squadron was ordered to Koli Point, under attachment to the 9th Marine Defense Battalion, with instructions to relieve the 147th Infantry.

The 132d Infantry, for the most part, remained on perimeter defense

during the remainder of the campaign. The struggle to secure Mount Austen had almost completely exhausted the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 132d, leaving only the comparatively fresh 2d Battalion available for further combat assignment.

The Americal's three 105mm howitzer battalions had been extremely active during all phases of the campaign on Guadalcanal. Virtually all infantry battalions in contact with the Japanese had been, at one time or another, supported by one of the three artillery battalions. Liaison officers and forward observers from the units switched from one regiment to another, from Army units to Marine units, with little loss in efficiency.

After its arrival on the island on 12 November the 245th Field Artillery moved into positions southwest of Henderson Field, on the banks of the Lunga River, and registered in on the following morning. On November 14 the battalion fired its first combat fire mission when it answered a call for a concentration to be laid on an enemy patrol. Eight days later, the battalion moved to positions 1,500 yards east of the Matanikau River to support infantry operations in that sector.

On the island since November 29, the 246th Field Artillery first occupied positions near Fighter Strip No. 2 where it remained until January 6. The 247th came ashore on December 8 and moved its howitzers into an area east of the Lunga River, some distance southeast of Henderson Field.

The last Americal Division artillery battalion, the 221st Field Artillery, armed with the more potent 155mm howitzers, arrived on Guadalcanal on January 4 and immediately took up positions two thousand yards southwest of Fighter Strip No. 2.

Arriving on the island on December 12, Col. William R. Woodward assumed command of all Division artillery operations, a task once borne by the 245th Field Artillery. Two days later, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Americal Division Artillery, joined the Division, bringing with it news of the promotion of Colonel Woodward to Brigadier General.

Prior to the relief and departure of the 1st Marine Division, the 245th and 246th Field Artillery Battalions had operated under the control of the artillery commander of Marine headquarters. Subsequent to the relief, all artillery functions on the island came under the control of General Woodward and his headquarters. Later, following the assumption of island control by the new XIV Corps headquarters, the Americal Division Artillery headquarters acted as that of the corps until the termination of organized resistance on the island.

In support of the 132d Infantry attacks on Mount Austen, the 247th Field Artillery, on December 24, moved to an area 1,500 yards west of the Lunga River, holding these positions until January 20.

Preparing for a supporting role in the corps offensive, the 246th Field Artillery displaced to new positions just south of those of the 245th on January 6. By this time, the 221st Field Artillery was in position near Fighter Strip No. 2 and all of the Americal's artillery was ready to support both the 2d Marine Division and the 25th Infantry Division.

Positions remained unchanged until January 20 when both the 221st and 247th moved forward. The medium battalion moved across the Matanikau and went into position near the base of Point Cruz while the latter unit joined the 245th and 246th east of the Matanikau. Following the capture of Kokumbona by the 27th Infantry on January 23, all four battalions began a series of forward displacements in an effort to keep up with the advancing infantrymen.

Two days after the capture of Kokumbona the 247th Field Artillery jumped to new emplacements two thousands yards east of the small coastal village. On the following day the 245th leap-frogged 1,200 yards farther west. On January 30 the 246th sped through the 245th's positions to move 1,500 yards northwest of Kokumbona. The 247th, not one to be left behind, countered with the first of a series of moves destined to carry it up the coast.

By February 4, however, the 245th Field Artillery had re-entered the picture from positions on the east bank of the Bonegi River, supporting activities to the northwest. Four days later the advance had gained sufficient ground to allow the 247th to displace to gun positions two thousand yards northwest of the Umasani River. From these positions at 0745 on February 9, the 247th Field Artillery fired the last rounds of the campaign as it registered on check points in front of the 161st Infantry.

The Americal's 57th Engineer Combat Battalion contributed greatly to the success of U.S. operations on Guadalcanal through the untiring efforts of its officers and men. Shortly after their arrival on November 12, men of Companies A and C were hard at work on the development of roads and trails within the perimeter. On December 8, after the remainder of the battalion had arrived, the 57th took on many new duties.

During its most active phases of the campaign the 57th Engineers constructed more than ten miles of new roads and trails and were charged with the maintenance and repair of an additional twelve miles of other roads. Trucks of the battalion hauled more than 2,500 loads of gravel

and coral fill, much of which was loaded by hand. They constructed seven bridges varying in length from 40 to 130 feet, four of which crossed the vital Matanikau River. In addition, these hard-working men prepared positions for artillery units, hospitals and other Division and corps units. In the war diary of this busy but modest battalion many of the entries were marked "routine engineer duties."

Operating under an odd provisional arrangement which precludes accurate, clear description, the 101st Medical Regiment carried out its duties during the days and nights of the campaign in a manner which certainly upheld the highest traditions of the medical profession. Confronted not only with the task of caring for the wounded but for the great number of victims of malaria and other tropical diseases, the many accomplishments on the part of the regiment's surgeons and physicians were noted and worked into future standing operating procedures for other medical units in the Pacific.

Medical personnel of the infantry regiments, in a similar fashion, cared for the wounded as soon as possible after they had fallen. In so doing, battalion surgeons and company aid men suffered and died along with the riflemen whose lives they were pledged to safeguard.

Chaplains of all faiths, too, moved through rear areas and front lines alike, talking to the men, joking with them, consoling them in their hours of fear and comforting them as they breathed their last. Services were often held for small groups of men within small-arms range of the front lines. No risk was too great for these "holy joes," these "padres," these men of God who placed their vocation and all it implies in time of war before their own personal safety.

The 101st Quartermaster Regiment's duties soon became routine, even during the hardest days of the campaign. Regardless of rain or shine, air raids or all-clears, ton after ton of food, clothing and equipment was moved to the units of the Americal. Without the help of the Quartermaster Regiment the riflemen in front-line positions might often have gone hungry.

Because the Americal Division, like any unit in action in modern warfare, could not operate without efficient means of communication, the 26th Signal Company played an important part in all Division phases of the campaign. Along the coastal plains, across the rivers and streams, over hills and through the jungles wire crews strung and laid hundreds of miles of wire. Breaks and short circuits in the wires required constant maintenance in order to keep telephone communications open day and night. Radio traffic at division and corps level kept shifts of operators

on duty twenty-four hours every day. It is to the company's credit that at no time during the campaign was the Division without vitally necessary communications with its units.

Signal Corps units with the Division produced one of the real heroes of the first offensive in the Pacific. "Blackie Halligan," a tiny, practically inconspicuous carrier pigeon, was the hero. Taken forward with a patrol of the 164th Infantry, Blackie remained caged until a critical moment. Then, bearing a message concerning the Japanese, one too detailed to transmit by radio, the pigeon was released. The enemy spotted the bird as it circled up through the trees to get its bearings, and opened fire. Though badly wounded by the fire, Blackie headed back toward the pigeon loft at Americal Division headquarters to deliver the message. In spite of the wounds, Blackie eventually survived and was retired to the Signal Corps Breeding and Training Center at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, after the war.

After the Marine landing in August and before the last serious Japanese resistance was overcome at the Bonegi River, the Japanese, as reported in Marine and Army intelligence estimates, were thought to have landed more than thirty-two thousand troops on Guadalcanal, twenty-four thousand of which were believed to have been divided between the 2d and 38th Infantry Divisions. Between the middle of November and the end of January the Tokyo Express was known to have made fifteen trips to the island, discharging nearly 4,500 officers and men. After the war, Japanese generals reported an additional ten thousand lost, when enemy troop transports were sunk en route to Guadalcanal.

Of the approximately one thousand prisoners captured during the six months of fighting, 235 were taken after the relief of the 1st Marine Division. Units of the Americal Division contributed 84 to this total.

Reports of casualties vary in American and Japanese circles to this day. XIV Corps estimates listed nearly 18,000 enemy killed, while Japanese 17th Army officials, in a postwar interrogation, claimed that 12,500 of their men had been killed in action or had died of wounds. Both sides seemed to agree that approximately 9,000 Japanese died of sickness on the island during the campaign.

Toward the end of January and during the first week in February the last runs of the Tokyo Express, made up of some twenty destroyers on each trip, were thought to use every available inch of space for the evacuation of Japanese troops. An undetermined number of barges, too, were sent to Guadalcanal to take troops from the island. American intelligence officers, including Lt. Col. William D. Long, the Americal

Division G-2, estimated that slightly more than four thousand Japanese had been evacuated before the termination of organized resistance on February 9. Informed Japanese officials, however, claimed that they had been able to withdraw many more troops to the northern Solomons.

All of the enemy withdrawals were accomplished despite the fact that Japanese officers were continually exhorting their men to fight to the death to prevent U.S. forces from gaining complete control of Guadalcanal. One officer rallied his men with these words:

"From now on the occupying operation of Guadalcanal is under observation of the whole world. Do not expect to return, not even one man, if the occupation is not successful. Every one must remember the honor of the Emperor. How he must suffer as he prays at the great Shrine of Ise. We must ease the Sacred anxiety. Fear no enemy, yield to no material matters, advance valiantly and ferociously. I am expecting great things from you."

There is no indication that these men lived up to the great expectations of their commander. No one knows whether any of the officers and men who heard these words were taken from the island. American forces had not helped to "ease the Sacred anxiety." In Japanese terms, the occupation of Guadalcanal was not successful. United States forces, "under observation of the whole world," had launched the first offensive and had seen it through many dark days to a victorious conclusion.

The cost of this impressive triumph had not been slight for the troops of the Americal Division. Between October 13, 1942, the day the 164th Infantry came ashore, and February 9, 1943, the end of the campaign, 482 officers and enlisted men of the Division gave their lives, 902 men were reported wounded in action, while another 51 died of their wounds. At the termination of hostilities, 4 men were still being carried as missing in action. In addition to the 1,439 battle casualties, at least as many more were suffering or had suffered from attacks of malaria, yellow jaundice and a host of other tropical diseases.

On February 25 Guadalcanal's shores were brightened by a visit made by Joe E. Brown, famed Hollywood comedian, who himself was to lose a son in the war. Flitting from one unit to another during his brief stay on the island, the wide-mouthed actor brought many a smile to homesick men longing for news from the United States. So deep an impression did Joe E. Brown make on the men of the Americal that he was later made an honorary member of the Division in a general order published two months later. He became the only entertainer to be so designated during the war by the Division

On March 1, 1943, the first echelon of the Americal Division sailed from Sealark Channel, bound for Viti Levu Island in the Fiji group. Included in the convoy were the 164th Infantry; the 245th and 246th Field Artillery Battalions; and detachments from Division headquarters, the 26th Signal Company, the 57th Engineers and the 101st Medical Regiment.

The next echelon followed on March 24 and 25 as the main elements of the 182d Infantry and the Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron moved out. The last group followed on April 5 as the departure of the 132d Infantry, the 221st and the 247th Field Artillery Battalions and the rear echelons of all other units cleared Guadalcanal of all physical traces of the Americal Division.

Unlike the previous sailings from the island, that of the last echelon was marked by a bold daylight air raid by Japanese fighters and bombers. As the ships of the convoy pulled away from the island under escort, a hundred enemy planes sped in from the northwest in an endeavor to cripple American shipping at this growing advance base. In the distance the raid sounded like a booming farewell to the Americal Division, this odd unit of spare parts which had come through its baptism of fire with colors flying.

Isa Lei

SOME SIX HUNDRED MILES EAST OF EFATE IN THE NEW HEBRIDES lie the western limits of the Fiji Islands, long considered a paradise of the Pacific. More than two hundred islands of all sizes and descriptions comprise this 7,000-square-mile British Crown colony which lies scattered a distance of three hundred miles across the 180th meridian from Viti Levu, the group's largest and most important island. Half of the population of 200,000 are husky, dark-skinned, fuzzy-haired natives, while nearly 100,000 are Indians, descendants of indentured laborers brought from India many years before to work in the canefields. The colony is governed from the city of Suva, in southeastern Viti Levu, noted as a port of call for peacetime travelers.

At the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, New Zealand Army forces were assigned the task of protecting the Fiji Islands from invasion by the Japanese, thereby safeguarding a vital link in the communications chain between the United States and Australia. On June 10, 1942, the 37th Infantry Division arrived from the United States to assume control of the defenses of the Fiji group.

Thoroughly trained in the United States prior to departure for overseas duty, the 37th still lacked an indoctrination in the intricacies of jungle warfare. During their ten-month stay on Viti Levu the Ohio National Guardsmen became proficient in this "new" style of fighting. In time the 37th Division was to play an important part in future offensives against the Japanese.

On March 6, 1943, the first echelon of the Americal Division sailed into Suva Harbor after a quiet trip from Guadalcanal, scene of its first successes against the enemy. Without delay the 164th Infantry and the 245th Field Artillery debarked and began relieving troops of the 37th Division in the Suva area. On the same day the 246th Field Artillery unloaded at Lautoka, key port in western Viti Levu, and made initial arrangements for the relief of 37th Division units in this general area.

After splitting at sea, the second echelon of the Americal steamed into Suva and Lautoka on March 29 to continue taking over tactical missions from the Ohio men. At the Fiji capital the 182d Infantry and the Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron came ashore while forward echelons of other Division units landed at Lautoka. By April 10 all units of the Americal had reached the Fijis as the 37th carried on with a movement to Guadalcanal which had been undertaken on April 2.

As the Americal Division slipped out of sight of Guadalcanal it brought with it citations from Maj. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, commanding general of XIV Corps. In commending the officers and enlisted men of the Division for their actions between October 13, 1942, to January 4, 1943, he said in part: "The success of these operations was achieved due to the aggressive leadership, thorough training, courage and high morale displayed by the officers and enlisted men of the Division."

In an additional commendation for its part in the final drive against the Japanese, General Patch wrote: "I am proud for the second time in the Guadalcanal campaign to cite the Americal Division for its outstanding performance of duty in action, again attributable to its determination, fighting spirit and splendid morale."

Upon arrival on Viti Levu, Brig. Gen. Edmund B. Sebree, Commanding General of the Americal, established his command post at Vunayasi, near Nandi, some fifteen miles south of Lautoka. The Americal Division Artillery commander, Brig. Gen. William R. Woodward, also set up his headquarters in the same vicinity. At this time, too, the Americal Division came under the control of the II Island Command, headed by Maj. Gen. Charles F. Thompson, whose headquarters were located in Suva.

Completing the relief of troops of the 37th Division shortly after arrival, the 164th Infantry, supported by the 245th Field Artillery, was charged with the protection of the Fiji capital and the strategic ground surrounding it. Elsewhere on the island, the 182d Infantry was assigned control of a sector from Momi Bay south and east to Sovi Harbor, with the 246th Field Artillery in direct support. The 132d Infantry, assigned the protection of the western sector, guarded the coastline from Yako, southeast of Nandi, to Korovunitoto, near Nathilau Point, eight miles northeast of Lautoka. From a base camp near Lawaki, a short distance southwest of Lautoka, the 247th Field Artillery offered support for the 132d.

This deployment of the main combat elements of the Division was the forerunner of an almost hard-and-fast regimental combat team

organization within the Americal, one which was to become characteristic of future training and combat action.

Placed in general support of tactical missions was the 221st Field Artillery, the Division's medium battalion. From bivouacs in the Nandi area the battalion prepared to move at a moment's notice, either as single batteries or as a complete battalion, to any threatened part of the island.

Early in April plans were completed in Washington for the reorganization of the Americal Division by means of a series of redesignations, disbandments and activations. Orders to this effect were forwarded to the headquarters of the United States Army Forces in the South Pacific Area in a secret letter from the Adjutant General's Office and, in turn, these orders were passed on to the Division. Subsequently, in general orders published by Division headquarters on April 30, it was ordered that the desired changes be made, effective May 1, 1943.

As a result, the 21st Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop was activated to replace the now concurrently disbanded Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron. Excess personnel and equipment were transferred from the unusual, colorful squadron as Capt. Peter J. Petite took command of the new unit. At the time of its activation the new 21st Reconnaissance Troop was in bivouac near Momi after its predecessor had moved there from Singatoka, changing from its first Viti Levu bivouac.

The Division ordnance situation had long been confused by the presence of a trio of units, none of which met the requirements for a triangular infantry division ordnance company. On Guadalcanal, in an attempt to iron out some of the attendant difficulties, the 22d Ordnance Medium Maintenance Company, the 51st Ordnance Ammunition Company and the 3465th Ordnance Medium Maintenance Company (Q) were formed into a provisional ordnance company as a tentative Division unit. In accordance with the new reorganization orders, the provisional ordnance company was now disbanded as the 721st Ordnance Light Maintenance Company was activated as the Americal's organic ordnance unit. Capt. James R. Bright became the company's first commander.

Under these same orders the Military Police Platoon of the Americal Division was activated to take the place of a provisional platoon previously formed with Major John D. Townsend in command. The provisional platoon had been set up on Guadalcanal in preparation for this activation as the 39th Military Police Company faded from the picture as an Americal Division unit. On arrival at Fiji the headquarters of the 39th was transferred to II Island Command headquarters.

On March 23 advance information had been received from

USAFISPA headquarters that the reorganization of the Division would soon be brought about. The USAFISPA letter orders directed that personnel and equipment of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 51st Infantry Brigade, be transferred to the 831st Signal Service Company on March 25 in preparation for a subsequent redesignation of the brigade headquarters.

On May 1, in accordance with the reorganization orders, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment and Finance Detachment of Task Force 6814 were ordered disbanded concurrent with the redesignation of 51st Brigade Headquarters as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Americal Division. Personnel and equipment were transferred from the disbanded detachments to the new Division headquarters as the redesignation resulted in the perpetuation of the past history of the old brigade headquarters.

At this time, too, the Americal picked up the new 125th Quartermaster Company, activated as a substitute for a provisional company formed on Guadalcanal from personnel and equipment of the old 101st Quartermaster Regiment. Capt. Cortland B. Bacall became the first commander of this new company, taking the reigns at the unit bivouac at Namaka.

Under the command of Major James F. Collins, a provisional medical battalion made up of troops of the bulky 101st Medical Regiment had been formed on Guadalcanal. Excess personnel had then been transferred to form a cadre for the 52d Field Hospital. As the reorganization of the Americal went forward now on Viti Levu, the provisional battalion was activated as the 121st Medical Battalion. The new unit, with headquarters in Sambeto Valley, spread its companies out over the island. Company A, working with the 164th Infantry, organized a bivouac at Samambula, outside Suva; Companies B and D established themselves in Singatoka; Company C set up aid stations and dispensaries in Mba and Lautoka.

The Division's musicians also felt the reorganization when the Division Artillery's band and that of the 182d Infantry were combined and redesignated Americal Division Band. CWO Chester E. Whiting took up the baton as bandmaster and soon produced an organization famed for its renditions of popular and classical music. The dance orchestra, formed within the band, performed at large- and small-unit shows and entertainments in all parts of the island during the months ahead.

Other units of the Division underwent relatively minor reorganizations through changes in tables of organization. Headquarters and Head-

quarters Company of the 57th Engineers became its Headquarters, Headquarters and Service Company, combining administrative and supply services under one command. The four artillery battalions underwent a similar change, regrouping their separate headquarters and headquarters batteries and service batteries as composite headquarters, headquarters and service batteries.

Additional changes in tables of organization for the infantry regiments resulted in the formation of headquarters and headquarters companies in each of the infantry battalions from what had been headquarters and headquarters detachments. Organic cannon companies had now been added to the regiments, but those of the Americal's infantry regiments had already been activated in the United States and were currently being trained before being sent to join their parent units.

The 26th Signal Company proved to be the only unit of the Division which passed through the first day in May without having undergone a change. The company, under the command of Capt. Harry T. Miller, had established its base camp in the Namaka area shortly before personnel from the company took over the commercial switchboard in Lautoka. Other detachments from the company set about the task of installing and maintaining hundreds of miles of wire communications between units of the Division while a radio net was being placed in operation.

At the time of this wholesale reorganization, the Americal was without another of its more colorful units, the 246th Field Artillery's Provisional Battery K. This battery, armed with the last of the 25-pounders, had been disbanded on Guadalcanal on February 26 by General Sebree after having fired but a few rounds during its part of the campaign. The officers and enlisted men of the battery, after the disbandment, were absorbed within the parent battalion.

As of May 1, therefore, the effective date of the reorganization, the Americal Division, under Brig. Gen. Edmund B. Sebree, consisted of these organically assigned units:

- Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Americal Division
- Military Police Platoon, Americal Division
- 21st Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop
- 26th Signal Company
- 57th Engineer Combat Battalion
- 121st Medical Battalion

125th Quartermaster Company
132d Infantry Regiment (less Cannon Company)
164th Infantry Regiment (less Cannon Company)
182d Infantry Regiment (less Cannon Company)
Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Americal Division Artillery
221st Field Artillery Battalion (155mm how.)
245th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm how.)
246th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm how.)
247th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm how.)
721st Ordnance Light Maintenance Company
Band, Americal Division

By virtue of this one general order the Americal Division now became a standard triangular infantry division, although, for some reason, the name, Americal *Infantry* Division, was never applied to it until late in the war. Each of the Division units was to retain its present designation throughout the remainder of its wartime existence, despite the fact that minor changes in tables of organization were to affect them.

During the time leading up to the reorganization of the Division, officers and men of all units spent much of their time preparing new bivouac areas or improving on old areas inherited from the 37th Division. Some units fell heir to native-built huts, called *bures*, while many more were springing into existence under the able hands of friendly, cooperative Fijians. Life on Fiji hardly met with Stateside standards, but for the veterans of Guadalcanal's rains, damp jungles and ever-stinking, glue-like mud, this was a great improvement.

Recreation centers soon sprung into existence in Suva and Lautoka as the men were accorded passes for the first time since the Division left New Caledonia. Most of the men preferred to travel to Suva since Lautoka, in the early days, offered little in the way of diversion. Larger and more modern, the Fiji capital had much more to offer the civilization-starved men.

Suva, with its more than 15,000 inhabitants, had ranked as an important Pacific port in peacetime. It had been a port of call for American passenger and merchants ships en route to Australia and New Zealand and for Pan-American clippers on trans-Pacific flights. Over Suva's docks had passed much of the sugar exported from the islands. Commercially and politically, therefore, the capital city had necessarily become the meeting place for representatives of the island's population in administrative, business and social functions.

Victoria Parade, the main street of the capital, might well have looked like the main street of any modern city had it not been for an odd intermixture of vehicles and people. A conglomeration of automobiles, bicycles, carriages, charabancs and pony carts was controlled by tall, stately, heavily bearded, neatly-dressed Sikh policemen; while barefoot Fijian officers, dressed in blue serge, sawtooth-hemmed skirts, red sashes and white shirts stood by to assist the Hindus. The sidewalks teemed with natives in brightly colored sulus, Indians in costumes of their native land and Europeans in starched white clothes.

Bazaars on the Street of All Nations seemed for all the world like a part of India itself. Strange fruits, sweetmeats and vegetables were offered for sale by Indian merchants who sat cross-legged on the counters amid their wares. Silver jewelry, beaten into artistic designs, was spread on other counters to attract buyers from among sightseeing soldiers. Soon the men of the Americal caught on to the knack of haggling over the prices being asked for the rings, bracelets, anklets and other souvenirs featured by the merchants.

The presence of the large Indian population in the Fijis was hardly to be expected by the untutored travelers of the Americal. These Hindus were the mainstay of the Fijian sugar industry. During World War I, when the use of indentured labor was halted, these frugal and industrious agriculturalists were raised to the rank of tenant farmers as the plantation owners sought a solution to the labor problem. Now, after a quarter century in this status, they controlled the production of sugar cane throughout the islands while the original owners maintained control over the processing and marketing of the cane.

Nearly outnumbering the native Fijians, the 100,000 Indians represented the largest racial bloc in the Crown colony and, prior to Pearl Harbor, were attempting to gain political equality with the Europeans. Special provisions had been made for them with respect to social services and public utilities, but the question of full equality was put aside at the outbreak of the war when the Governor General suspended constitutional government and substituted an emergency system of government by decree.

The relationship between Indian and Fijian, even in that which arose between landlord and tenant, was generally excellent. In return for having provided an answer to the islands' labor problem, the Indians had been given freedom, health and prosperity to a degree they never could have known in their crowded homeland. Far from their ancestral soil, the Hindus adhered to all of their ancient customs, save for the abolish-

ment of the age-old caste system. Many of Suva's most successful shopkeepers, artisans and traders were Indians, while the Fiji taxi trade was virtually an Indian monopoly. Without creating ill feeling, these law-abiding people, as a whole, had brought an abundant measure of prosperity to the Fiji Islands.

The colonization and the civilization of the islands and the increase in the importance of the Indians had not succeeded in eliminating the natives. Colorful in character and actions, much of the old allure of the islands was centered around these good-natured Polynesians whose ancestors were reported to have been cannibals. Even in the city, the Fijian male, averaging six feet in height, towered impressively over the Hindus, the Europeans and the few squat Orientals.

Hidden in the remoteness of the past century is the story that the United States had had an opportunity to gain possession of the islands. In the year 1859 the supreme native chief offered the islands to the British if Queen Victoria's government would pay an assessment of damages adjudged against the natives. Failing to reach a satisfactory agreement with the British, the chief, two years later, submitted a similar offer to the United States, which offer was lost in the shuffle of the early days of the Civil War. In 1874 the Fiji Islands were finally joined with the British Empire as a Crown colony.

Americal Division soldiers were quick to learn a part of the local language. To a Fijian every American form of greeting could be expressed in one word—"Bula!" "Bula!" not only became a standard form of greeting in Fiji but in other parts of the world in which men of the Americal were to serve.

Although the natives generally disliked working for the white man—a fact which forced the use of indentured laborers years before—they quite regularly agreed to take over the laundry problem for the men. In time each squad or platoon had its own laundry man who regularly greeted the men with the familiar, "Bula, Joel Got laundry?"

Money seemed to mean little to the natives except, perhaps, as a means of purchasing cigarettes. Officers and men alike found that cigarettes were more attractive to the Fijians than the islanders' currency and soon hourly wage scales were computed in fractions of packs of cigarettes. After first having been "paid" with off-brands of cigarettes, the natives, knowing that better brands were available, became discriminating enough to ask for them by name, according to personal preferences.

One Fijian song, often heard at feasts and social gatherings, came to stand out above all others. This was "*Isa Lei*," the anthem of the

islands. Its haunting melody stuck with the men of the Americal months and years after the last man had left Suva Harbor.

"*Isa Lei*," explained a native, "is a versatile phrase of greeting which covers nearly every conceivable situation. With it I would offer you congratulations, or I would wish success. Through it I would join with you in your hour of happiness or in your moments of sadness and despair. '*Isa Lei*' means so much that is good and right in friendly, daily greetings that it is truly difficult to assign any precise meaning to the words."

Meanwhile, there was much to be done in order to carry out the mission assigned the Division, one not unlike that first assigned Task Force 6814 on New Caledonia the year before. Key observation posts along the coast were manned on a 24-hour basis and all offshore activity was noted and reported. Along the water's edge, continuous reconnaissance was made in search of evidence of attempted landings which might have escaped the watchful eyes of the men at the observation posts. There was no relaxing of vigilance in spite of the fact that Guadalcanal had been taken. Japan might yet strike back.

Malaria, the scourge of the tropics, had made its first appearance within the ranks of the Americal on Guadalcanal, but now its full effects were beginning to be felt even more. After the arrival of the Division on Viti Levu, the use of atabrine as a suppressive treatment was temporarily stopped in an effort to determine the number of officers and men carrying the malarial parasite in their blood.

It was not long after this that the wards of the island's military hospitals were crowded to capacity with malaria patients from the Division. Units of the 121st Medical Battalion in the Singatoka area took in nearly six hundred patients in emergency wards. Before other emergency wards could be established, the sick were treated in unit areas under the direction of the Division surgeon.

At the height of the malaria rampage the 7th Evacuation Hospital, normally a 300-bed unit, was treating more than 2,000 officers and men from the Americal. Some returned to the hospitals time and time again, experiencing as many as ten separate and distinct attacks of the mosquito-borne disease. When it was seen that a continuation of this policy would almost completely exhaust the Division, atabrine suppressive treatments were reinstituted on a Division-wide scale. When the epidemic had finally been halted, medical officers estimated that at least eighty-five per cent of the Guadalcanal veterans who had come to Viti Levu had been hospitalized at least once for the disease.

Tasks connected with the preparation of suitable living quarters for

the men and the terrific onslaught of malaria drained a tremendous supply of officers and men from normal duties and from training programs necessary as a foundation for future battle efficiency. Training of troops, at first, was only token in nature, but with each passing day it became more intensified as manpower became available once again.

On May 19 Lt. Col. William D. Long gave up to his successor, Lt. Col. Jacob S. Sauer, the post as G-2 of the Division and took over Col. Daniel W. Hogan's 182d Infantry Regiment, allowing the latter to return to the United States for further assignment.

Ten days later Maj. Gen. John R. Hodge, once with the 25th Infantry Division on Guadalcanal, took command of the Americal as Brig. Gen. Edmund B. Sebree temporarily reverted to the post of Assistant Division Commander before returning to the United States for a new assignment. These changes were the first to be felt by the Division as key veterans of the Guadalcanal campaign were being recalled to Stateside duty to train others for combat duty.

On June 16 command of the 164th Infantry passed from Col. Paul G. Daly to Col. Crump Garvin, the Division chief of staff. To replace Colonel Garvin, Lt. Col. Paul A. Gavan stepped up from G-3 to acting chief of staff. Lt. Col. Jacob S. Sauer switched from G-2 to G-3 when replaced by Lt. Col. Richard H. Agnew. Staff changes made previous to this time had placed Lt. Col. Mervyn M. Magee as G-4 and Lt. Col. Samuel E. Gee as G-1. The adjutant general's position, long held by Lt. Col. Kenneth G. Hoge, had been taken over by Maj. William H. Biggerstaff on April 16. And Col. Joseph K. Bush, a 25th Division Guadalcanal veteran, had been transferred to the Americal in April and had relieved Lt. Col. Andrew F. Casper as commander of the 132d Infantry.

Lt. Col. Paul A. Gavan's temporary tour of duty as Division chief of staff came to an end on July 5 when Col. Claude M. McQuarrie took over the post after having been transferred to the Americal. Colonel Gavan was now transferred to Division Artillery headquarters where he became Brig. Gen. William R. Woodward's executive officer.

A week later Brig. Gen. William A. McCulloch, who had also seen service with the 25th Division on Guadalcanal, took over the role of Assistant Division Commander from General Sebree, at which time the latter took up a temporary post as chief of staff under Maj. Gen. Charles F. Thompson, commanding general of II Island Command.

In mid-July the ranks of the Americal Division, thinned by the fighting on Guadalcanal and by the scourge of malaria, were partially filled as the first group of replacements arrived on Viti Levu. In jest at first,

these men were filled with all sorts of horrid tales of combat in the jungles, filled to the extent that they feared the thought of fighting and, at the same time, admired the courage of these cold-hearted veterans. At length, however, in all seriousness, the training of these new officers and men stressed the fact an intricate knowledge of jungle warfare and Japanese tactics would bring with it a confidence that would do much to overcome the natural impulse to fear injury and death.

On July 22 General Hodge designated January 23 of each year as Organization Day, commemorating the departure of Task Force 6814 from New York. In a letter accompanying the general orders announcing Organization Day General Hodge commented briefly on the Guadalcanal Campaign and on the future:

"The command was among the first troops of this nation to contact the enemy in offensive action at a place of our own choosing . . . I am confident that whatever future tests you may face, you will be equal to the task and will acquit yourself in a manner worthy of the highest traditions of the Armed Services."

In May the Americal Division had been notified that certain units and personnel of units were eligible for the Presidential Unit Citation to be awarded by the Navy Department to the 1st Marine Division, reinforced, for action against the Japanese on Guadalcanal during the period August 7 to December 8, 1942. On the basis of arrival dates, the following units, listed according to designations in effect at that time, were declared by the Division to be eligible for the award should it be granted:

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 51st Infantry Brigade
(forward echelon only)

164th Infantry Regiment

182d Infantry Regiment (less 3d Battalion)

Headquarters, Americal Division Artillery

245th Field Artillery Battalion

246th Field Artillery Battalion

Provisional Battery K, 246th Field Artillery Battalion

Battery F, 244th Coast Artillery

57th Engineer Combat Battalion (less detachments)

Provisional Company B, 101st Medical Regiment

Provisional Company H, 101st Medical Regiment

Headquarters, 101st Quartermaster Regiment

Company A, 101st Quartermaster Regiment

1st Platoon, Company B, 101st Quartermaster Regiment

51st Ordnance Company
 22d Ordnance Medium Maintenance Company
 Company A, 82d Ordnance Medium Maintenance Battalion (Q)
 Finance Detachment, Task Force 6814
 Commanding Officer, 26th Signal Company

In citing the 1st Marine Division in the name of the President, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox said in part:

“ . . . this Reinforced Division not only held their important strategic positions despite determined and repeated Japanese naval, air and land attacks, but by a series of offensive operations against strong enemy resistance drove the Japanese from the proximity of the airfield and inflicted great losses on them by land and air attacks. The courage and determination displayed in these operations were of an inspiring order.”

Thus these units of the Americal became the first in the United States Army to be so honored by the Navy Department for action against the enemy during World War II. The ribbon, symbolic of the award, was to become a mark of distinction for these veterans of the early stages of the campaign who were later scattered among Army units throughout the world.

Time began to pass more quickly as the Division training programs were intensified. Regimental and battalion jungle problems were staged day and night in the thickly covered mountainous areas farther inland as more and more replacements were being indoctrinated with the spirit of offensive action characteristic of the Division. The new 21st Reconnaissance Troop grew more fit with each passing day as the traditions of its colorful predecessor, the Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron, were being upheld. The field artillery battalions trained and retrained with dry runs in the battalion areas and with service practice at either of Viti Levu's two artillery ranges. Officers and noncommissioned officers attended unit and Division schools on a wide range of subjects as the tactical and technical skills of the combined arms and services of the Americal were being sharpened to a degree never before attained.

Recreation, however, still continued to play an important role in the daily lives of the men. Competitive sports of all descriptions were organized within the regiments, battalions, companies and platoons to fill free afternoons and weekends. On Division level baseball and softball leagues were established to widen the range of competition. In Septem-

ber, after a series of sharp diamond clashes, the 26th Signal Company's softball team, led by Tech. Sgt. Bradford Parker, captured the Division crown in that league.

Division, regimental and battalion field days brought individual competition to the fore with a hectic series of three-legged races, sack races, horse races, boxing, wrestling and a score of other events reminiscent of track meets and country picnics. General Hodge, General McCulloch and members of the Division staff habitually appeared at these gatherings to share in the men's fun and frolic.

Decoration ceremonies and parades became more frequent as officers and men who had distinguished themselves in action on Guadalcanal were presented with decorations they so richly deserved. On June 14 representatives of the Americal took part in the Allied Nations Parade in Suva, putting on an impressive display of American military power for the islanders.

As training continued through September, the 21st Reconnaissance Troop assumed the role of the "enemy" in jungle combat problems and attempted to harass the infantrymen in typical Japanese fashion. On other occasions Fijian soldiers took over the duties of the "enemy," showing an ease in moving quietly through the jungle far superior to that ever displayed by the Americans or the Japanese.

Working "against" the 21st Reconnaissance Troop on one particular problem, the Fijians were given the mission of attempting to infiltrate through the troop's night perimeter. "Armed" with pieces of chalk, the crafty natives were told to mark everything they could touch on and within the perimeter. Normal night security measures were carried out by the Americans who were told to capture any Fijian seen during the night.

When dawn came, after a reportedly quiet night, surprised and chagrined men of the 21st found chalk marks on weapons, shirts, packs and on a host of other items within the perimeter. Yet not a single Fijian had been seen! This incident served to prove that men experienced in night movement through the jungles could inflict great damage on unsuspecting troops.

The Americal underwent an additional minor reorganization on September 28 when new tables of organization became effective. As a result, Headquarters, Special Troops, came into existence as the administrative headquarters for the Division's service units. In addition, the 21st Reconnaissance Troop became officially mechanized when reorganized along modern cavalry lines. In the artillery battalions the composite

headquarters, headquarters and service batteries yielded place to the old of headquarters and headquarters batteries, and service batteries, again separating the administrative and supply services.

On October 1, Lt. Col. Samuel E. Gee was relieved as G-1 by Major John D. Townsend, to take command of the new Headquarters, Special Troops. Lt. James I. Sikes, to replace Major Townsend, became Division provost marshal and the commander of the Military Police Platoon.

New training problems continued to improve on the combined skills of the infantry and the artillery in regimental combat team operations. Artillery forward observers, working with assault troops in simulated attacks on "enemy" positions, adjusted the fire of their battalions close to themselves and the infantrymen as fresh confidence was being gained in the manner of performance of the direct-support battalions.

By this time the Americal's private air force was in operation on the island under the control of Division Artillery headquarters. In June the first assigned liaison pilot, Lt. Robert B. Carow, joined the Division, followed shortly by Lt. Charles W. Cross. Without planes, however, the two-man air section was grounded. As a result of some scouting around the airfield at Nandi, Lieutenant Carow discovered two virtually abandoned L-4s, wartime versions of the Piper Cub. After recruiting some help, the two pilots repaired and tested the pair of light planes and found them airworthy.

These two officers, first trained and commissioned as artillery officers and then as liaison pilots, were to become the airborne eyes of the Americal's artillery, supplementing the ground observers. Their apparently flimsy planes were to become as popular with the men of the Division as they were to be feared by the Japanese.

Meanwhile, in the Solomons, new offensives had been launched against the enemy. United States forces jumped to the northwest from Guadalcanal into the New Georgia group. By September 1 Vella Lavella, Rendova and Vangunu Islands had been taken and the entire group was under U.S. control.

In late September 1942, Australian troops, aided by United States infantrymen, had turned back a concerted Japanese drive against Port Moresby, in southern New Guinea, paving the way for the first offensive in Gen. Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Theater of Operations. A combined air and land movement across the rugged Owen Stanley Mountains unleashed the power of the United States

32d Infantry Division against the Japanese as New Guinea began to slip from enemy control under increasing Allied pressure.

In the North Pacific the war took on an arctic flavor as the Japanese were driven from Attu in the Aleutians. It was later found that heavy naval and air bombardments had forced the enemy to silently withdraw from nearby Kiska.

Long before this time Viti Levu had become an important Allied base, one through which much tactical traffic passed. The United States Navy had established advanced bases at Suva and Nandi Bay, on opposite sides of the island. The Army Air Forces had laid out a pair of airfields at Nandi, capable of handling planes of any size or weight. At Nausori, near Suva, an additional airstrip had been built to accommodate even more planes.

The military nature of Viti Levu in time of war required that every precaution be taken against information of strategic value being passed to the enemy. The easy-going Fijians' loyalty to the Allied cause could hardly be doubted. The past personal histories of most Europeans on the island were quite well known. The Indians, however, in certain instances, had long nursed strong anti-British feelings and often showed a distinct *laissez-faire* attitude toward the island's war effort. Despite the fact that it might have been an injustice to consider the Indians pro-Japanese as a whole, their actions were nonetheless under the close, continuous scrutiny of counter-intelligence agents.

In late October, as new thrusts into the upper Solomons were taking shape, interest in the Division's training programs was even more enlivened. As news of U.S. successes on the island of Bougainville reached Viti Levu, it was felt that the Americal might see action again before long.

But in the meantime the advent of the island's rainy season hampered training and made life and travel difficult. Extremely heavy rains washed out roads and forced the 57th Engineers to undertake around-the-clock maintenance operations in an effort to keep vital traffic rolling. Queen's Road, around the southern shores of the island, took on all the physical characteristics of an elongated washboard.

Torrential downpours quickly turned trickles of water into roaring, foaming streams and flooded several bivouac areas. Raincoats and ponchos were inseparable from their men day and night, but yet activities continued.

On Viti Levu, as on any island in the Pacific, rations were adequate, but they expectedly lacked the appeal of garrison rations

issued in the States. After more than a year overseas, the men had become accustomed to the steady diet of canned and dehydrated foods. The Army Air Forces, however, managed to relieve some of this monotony through its base at Nandi.

In equipping the Nandi airfield, the Air Forces had thought to include a large ice-cream freezer capable of producing ice cream in quantity for purchase through post exchanges. Americal Division units succeeded in reaching an agreement through which supplies of this long-missed delicacy could be purchased from company funds. Regular purchases were made by units in turn so that some touch of home could be provided for the men.

On December 9 Brig. Gen. William C. Dunckel arrived on the island to relieve Brig. Gen. William R. Woodward as commanding general, Americal Division Artillery. General Dunckel had only recently been division artillery commander in the 104th Infantry Division, with which division General Woodward was soon to serve.

On this same morning the last group of officer replacements joined the Division and were assigned to infantry and artillery units. In all units the first preparations were being made for movement from the island, but training still continued in earnest for all personnel not actively engaged in this work.

The Division's first movement order was issued on the following day, outlining a projected plan for the displacement by echelon from the Fijis to a forward combat zone. Though the actual designation of the zone was shrouded in the secrecy of code names and numbers, it was felt that Bougainville might be the Americal's destination.

The orders called for a four-echelon move to the forward area, and for the concurrent establishment of a rear echelon on Guadalcanal as the movement was being made. The tactical loading of equipment and supplies and the embarkation of troops were scheduled for both Suva and Lautoka in order to complete these phases as quickly as possible.

First to leave the island was the advance party, headed by Brig. Gen. William C. Dunckel, the Division Artillery commander. Included in the party were G-2 and G-3, Division engineer, surgeon and signal officer, headquarters commandant, Division Artillery S-3 and assistants to the Division ordnance officer and quartermaster. This group was to arrange for the debarkation of early echelons, assignment to assembly areas and for entry into action, as well as for the initial supply and maintenance of the units.

On December 17 the loading of equipment and supplies for the

first echelon was undertaken. Two days later, after all of the troops had been embarked, the first echelon moved out to sea and headed northwest toward the Solomons. In the group were these complete units:

164th Infantry Regiment
 Company C, 57th Engineer Combat Battalion
 Company A, 121st Medical Battalion
 1st Platoon, Company D, 121st Medical Battalion

There were detachments from these units:

- Headquarters Company, Americal Division
 Headquarters, Special Troops
 Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Division Artillery
 245th Field Artillery Battalion
 182d Infantry
 Headquarters, Headquarters and Service Company, 57th Engineer Combat Battalion
 26th Signal Company
 125th Quartermaster Company
 Headquarters, 121st Medical Battalion
 721st Ordnance LM Company
 Military Police Platoon

By December 22 the second echelon had completed loading and had moved out to sea in the wake of the first group. In the convoy, which lay to off Guadalcanal on Christmas Day, were the following units:

182d Infantry Regiment (less detachment)
 245th Field Artillery Battalion (less detachment)
 Company B, 57th Engineer Combat Battalion
 Company B, 121st Medical Battalion
 Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Division Artillery (less detachment)
 721st Ordnance LM Company (less detachments)
 125th Quartermaster Company (less detachments)
 26th Signal Company (less detachments)

In addition there were detachments from these units:

246th Field Artillery Battalion
 247th Field Artillery Battalion
 221st Field Artillery Battalion
 132d Infantry Regiment

Shortly after the turn of the year the third echelon, using the ships which had transported the first group to its destination, began loading at Lautoka and Suva. On January 3 1944 these fully loaded ships departed for the Solomons, carrying the following troops:

132d Infantry (less 1st Battalion and detachments)
 246th Field Artillery Battalion (less detachments)
 Company A, 57th Engineer Combat Battalion
 Company C, 121st Medical Battalion
 Headquarters, Headquarters and Service Company, 57th Engineer
 Combat Battalion (less detachments)
 Detachment, 221st Field Artillery Battalion
 Detachment, 21st Reconnaissance Troop

Three days later the fourth and last group steamed away from Viti Levu. On board the ships which had carried the second echelon to the forward area were:

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Americal Division (less
 detachments)
 Headquarters, Special Troops (less detachment)
 Medical Detachment, Special Troops
 Americal Division Band
 Military Police Platoon (less detachment)
 21st Reconnaissance Troop (less detachments)
 221st Field Artillery Battalion (less detachments)
 247th Field Artillery Battalion (less detachments)
 Headquarters, 121st Medical Battalion (less detachment)
 2d Platoon, Company D, 121st Medical Battalion
 Remainder, 26th Signal Company
 Remainder, 125th Quartermaster Company
 Remainder, 721st Ordnance LM Company
 106th Ordnance Bomb Disposal Squad
 107th Ordnance Bomb Disposal Squad
 161st Signal Photo Detachment

Meanwhile under Capt. Joseph P. Driscoll, assistant division quartermaster, the rear echelon of the Division was being moved to Guadalcanal, to remain until such time as it was deemed advisable to join it with the Americal in the forward area.

By the evening of January 6, 1944, strengthened by a nine-month rest on Viti Levu, revitalized by the infusion of energetic replacements and

hardened by intensive retraining, a more powerful Americal Division was fully ready to add to its laurels on a new field of combat in the Pacific.

In a pre-departure message to his troops, General Hodge wrote, in part:

“This Division worked hard during the past few months, preparing for tasks that lie ahead. We have made great progress under conditions that left much to be desired. Discipline, appearance and soldierly conduct have shown marked improvement. Wishful thinking has waned as more and more of us are showing willingness to face squarely the hard facts about this war and our task therein. Intensive combat training has brought to all of us confidence in ourselves and in our ability to cope with the enemy under all conditions. The combined result is a great improvement in the mental and moral fiber of the command and the development of all important self-control in individuals . . .

“I take this opportunity to express personally my confidence that each officer and man of this Division is able to and will perform fully his duties as a member of the great divisional team, and the confidence that our team can perform any tasks it may be given in a manner that leaves no regrets, no recriminations and no loose ends.”

The year ahead, 1944, was to offer combat and more combat for the Americal under some of the most difficult conditions yet encountered in the Pacific. The rugged days of Guadalcanal were gone. The United States drives in the Pacific were gaining momentum on an ever-widening scale. The Americal Division was now stepping back into the fight.

At Empress Augusta Bay

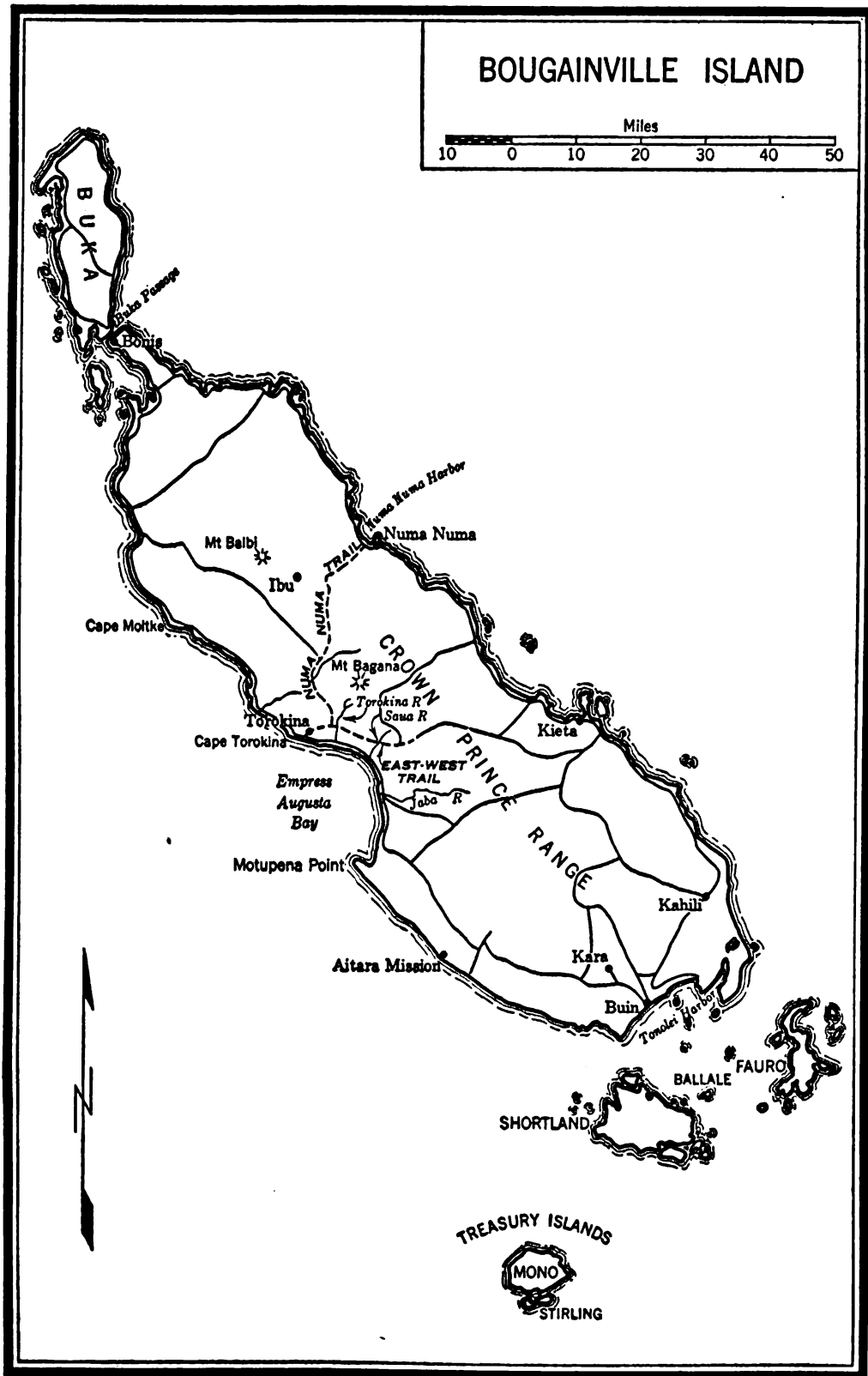
AT THE UPPER END OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, FOUR HUNDRED miles to the northwest of Guadalcanal, is the island of Bougainville, its 3,500 square miles representing the largest single land mass in the group. Approximately 125 miles long and ranging from 30 to 48 miles in width, the island is split by the Emperor and Crown Prince Ranges and is capped by two active volcanoes, 10,000-foot Mount Balbi in the north and 6,500-foot Mount Bagana, near Empress Augusta Bay. Bougainville's narrow coastal plain is generally low and swampy. Practically all of the island's interior is covered with what is reputed to be the thickest and most impenetrable jungle in the Pacific. The annual rainfall exceeds a hundred inches and in many parts of the island brief torrential rainstorms are almost a daily occurrence the year round.

Before World War I Bougainville had been a German colonial possession, but occupation of the island by Australian troops brought this era to a close. The island was mandated to Australia after the war and Kieta, on the east coast, became the administrative center.

The 1930 population of the island was estimated to include more than forty-six thousand extremely dark-skinned natives, plus about a hundred white missionaries and plantation managers and some forty Chinese. Most of the natives had already been converted to Christianity by Catholic and Protestant missionaries whose many small villages were spread throughout the island.

After rolling down through New Guinea in the early days of 1942, the Japanese occupied Bougainville. Airfields sprang into existence at Kahili and Kara in the south, at Kieta and Tenekau on the east coast and at Bonis in the north. On Buka Island, just to the north of Bougainville, the Japanese constructed still another airfield on the shores of Buka Passage, across from the airfield at Bonis.

To the south of Bougainville, they began more airfield construction work on Ballale Island, one of the Shortland Islands, while on nearby



Faisi a large seaplane base took shape. At Tonolei Harbor, at the southern tip of Bougainville, the Japanese set up an advanced naval base.

The general scheme of the U.S. advance up through the Solomons was to extend the bomber range closer and closer to strategic Rabaul and Kavieng with the intention of either neutralizing these two Japanese bastions or softening them for eventual land assault.

As U.S. troops worked and fought their way up through Rendova, Rice Anchorage, Munda and Vella Lavella, the initial plans were being laid for the invasion of Bougainville. It was first thought that a landing might be made in the southern end of the island, along with landings on Ballale, Faisi and Shortland, but this plan was soon abandoned.

A later plan called for assaults on the shores of Choiseul and the Treasury Islands, south of Bougainville, and for the construction of airfields on these islands as a preliminary to the actual invasion of the target area. This plan was subsequently amended to include virtually simultaneous landings on Bougainville at either Kieta or at Empress Augusta Bay on the west coast.

Although Admiral Halsey maintained control over all forces in the South Pacific, General MacArthur, commander of the Southwest Pacific area, had general strategic control over operations in the South Pacific. In commenting on the plans for the Bougainville invasion, General MacArthur stated that the landings south of the island would not be sufficient in themselves and that he wished a landing to be made on Bougainville about November 1, 1943. These operations, it was no doubt felt, would tie in closely with those under his direct control in the Southwest Pacific.

On September 22, 1943, Admiral Halsey issued his first warning orders for the impending operations. In these orders he directed the commanding general, I Marine Amphibious Corps, and supporting naval task-force commanders to be prepared to execute either of two plans. The first plan called for the seizure and holding of the Treasury Islands and the northern sector of Empress Augusta Bay and for the construction of airfields in the latter area. The alternate plan called for the seizure of the Treasury Islands and Choiseul, the construction of radar installations, PT-boat bases and troop-staging points and, in December, for the capture of the enemy airfield at Tenekau, on Bougainville's east coast. Admiral Halsey set November 1, 1943, as D-day.

It was now deemed advisable to make the landings on the Treasury group five days before D-day and for this purpose the 8th Brigade of the New Zealand 3d Division was attached to the I Marine Amphibious

Corps. In addition, the 2d Marine Parachute Battalion was attached to the corps with instructions to make a series of raids on Choiseul "for a period of about twelve days." These two landings, made in advance of the Empress Augusta Bay assaults, were designed to throw the Japanese off balance with indications of further possible U.S. landings in this general area.

Time passed quickly as all preparations were completed and troops were being embarked. Transports and escort vessels gathered in bases all through the South Pacific and were soon en route to the target area.

On the morning of October 27, 1943, New Zealand troops of the 8th Brigade pushed across the beaches of the Treasury group in the first of the planned series of moves. On the same night, some six hundred Marines moved noiselessly into Choiseul's jungles to begin raids on Japanese installations there. The invasion of the Treasury group caught the enemy unawares and quick gains were recorded. By October 31 radar installations were in operation and PT-boat bases were under construction.

Meanwhile, aerial bombardment of Bougainville bases was mounting in intensity as planes from American-controlled islands in the southern and central Solomons pockmarked a half-dozen enemy airfields in the Bougainville area. By October 31 the assault had reached its peak; only the Japanese airfields at Bonis and Buka were in partial operation. The only serious aerial threat to the security of the impending landing could be offered from Rabaul and Kavieng.

Under cover of darkness reconnaissance in detail was being made along the beaches across which the assault troops would be required to move. One small patrol, put ashore by submarine, studied the beaches north of the bay but was unable to reach the bay itself. Other submarine crews lay offshore inside the reef and studied the beaches through glasses. Patrol planes photographed the shores daily, adding more valuable information.

Active operations in the area began before dawn on November 1. Warships steamed north to Buka Passage and peppered the airfields at Buka and Bonis, making certain that no aerial resistance would be offered from these fields.

At 0601, inside the bay, warships of the Allied task force screening for the assault force opened fire on the beaches ranging from Cape Torokina westward to the mouth of the Laruma River. Puruata Island and Torokina Island, small, jungled bits of land off the tip of Cape Torokina, were also taken under fire. For forty-five minutes, as the day

grew lighter, the combined guns of the fleet blasted at shore targets while carrier-borne aircraft bombed and strafed other targets in the area.

An estimated three hundred Japanese were to oppose the Marines on shore, but emplacements were difficult to locate at first. The enemy, troops of the Japanese 6th Division, were veterans of the infamous Rape of Nanking in 1937. Spread throughout the rest of the island were other elements of the 6th Division, plus officers and men of the 17th and 38th Divisions, all under the control of the Japanese 17th Army. Some ten thousand Japanese naval troops brought the total enemy strength on Bougainville to approximately fifty thousand.

By 0730 the first waves of the 3d Marine Division had reached the shore as the Japanese began reacting to the new U.S. thrust. A 75mm mountain gun, emplaced in the pillbox on Cape Torokina, inflicted heavy casualties with deadly flanking fire on personnel in landing craft. Quick counteraction on the part of the Marines, however, knocked out the gun and permitted other landing craft to move safely to shore.

Enemy resistance built up rapidly in the dense jungles and then began to fade. When it became evident that the opposition would not last much longer, every effort was made to gain ground and to overcome the Japanese defenses. In the right sector of the beachhead all resistance ceased at 1900 after the leading elements of the 3d Marine Division moved a short distance inland.

On Puruata Island, however, the Marines who were assigned the task of clearing this small spot of land did not fare so well. A small and extremely determined group of Japanese resisted every effort to dislodge them from their well constructed pillboxes. It was not until late in the afternoon of November 2 that Puruata was reported secured.

Bodies of the Japanese were examined as the fighting died down in the right sector, the most active sector of the beachhead. The corpses were found to have been dressed in clean, pressed uniforms complete with all insignia of rank and branch of service and with a complete array of campaign ribbons. Enemy barracks located inland from Cape Torokina were discovered to be clean and well maintained and the soldiers' equipment was neatly laid out, as if for inspection. Neat, well constructed officers' quarters stood nearby. Everything found in the area was indicative of a group of soldiers well schooled in both garrison and field duties.

During the entire day on D-day landing operations were hampered by extremely heavy surf. High breakers rolled onto the beaches to smash against the sands. Small landing craft were shattered into useless debris

by the powerful waves. A number of serious injuries were reported and the seas overturned and waterlogged equipment and supplies. It is a real tribute to the seamanship of the landing craft coxswains that the ship-to-shore operations proceeded at all satisfactorily on D-day and in the days which followed.

Japanese air power was prompt in putting in an appearance as the troops moved toward shore. A furious fusillade of fire greeted the raiders as anchored transports, screening warships and planes answered the attacks. Few Japanese fighters managed to break through the aerial cover to strafe the transports and the troops on shore. Only light casualties and damage resulted.

On the afternoon of November 1 Navy search planes spotted a force of Japanese cruisers and destroyers heading down toward the new beachhead. As Allied surface units sped to the northwest to intercept the enemy, the ships turned and fled. That night, under cover of darkness, a dozen enemy ships steamed down toward the Allied fleet, hoping to move in undetected. Some thirty miles northwest of Empress Augusta Bay, however, the Japanese task force was met by an Allied force approximately equal in size and strength. At 0240 on the morning of November 2 one round precipitated a twelve-hour battle between the two forces. For nearly half a day the two groups of ships exchanged fire at almost maximum range. By 1400 the Japanese had had their fill. After losing a cruiser and four destroyers and suffering damage to four other ships, the enemy turned abruptly and hustled out of range of the potent Allied guns. The safety of the Bougainville beachhead was now reasonably assured.

Meanwhile, the 3d Marine Division was beginning a determined push inland through the jungles and across the lagoons and swamps. Extremely dense undergrowth made lateral communication difficult during the advance. Visual contact was often lost between individuals and small units as patrols led the way for the main assault forces. Japanese defense groups routed and chased into the jungles on D-day were again met and scattered by the advance patrols.

During the early morning hours of November 7 the first enemy counterthrust took shape as some seven hundred troops were landed near the mouth of the Laruma River, northwest of the beachhead, by four destroyers operating out of Rabaul. The Japanese force landed on such a wide front along the beach that it was difficult for its commander to quickly assemble his troops for the move against the perimeter. Faced with the decision of attacking with what forces he could gather in an

attempt to retain the element of surprise or postponing his assault until the entire force could be assembled, the enemy commander chose to move toward the U.S. positions with all possible haste, using the troops immediately available.

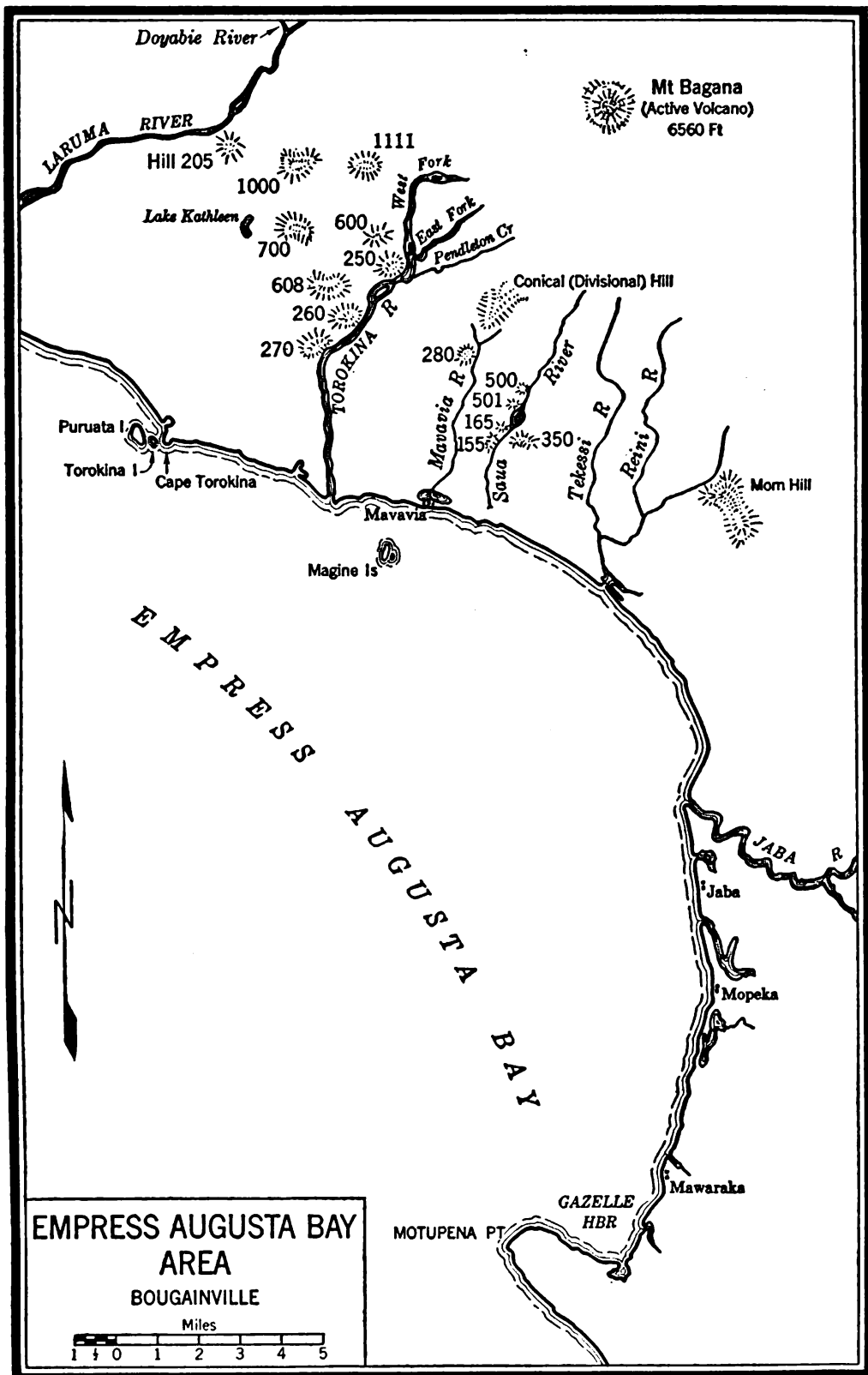
The landing, however, had been detected not long after it had taken place, ruling out the element of surprise. A Marine outpost at the Laruma had seen the Japanese moving in from the beach and had radioed the information back to I Marine Amphibious Corps headquarters. The left sector of the perimeter was on the alert.

Swiftly, the Japanese struck at the Marine lines on the left of the beachhead. Stubbornly refusing to believe that they could not drive a wedge into the U.S. lines, the Japanese struck again and again, only to be beaten back each time. Subsequently, the Marines pushed out from the left flank in a series of counterattacks, forcing the remnants of the enemy force to withdraw into the brush in confusion. By the evening of November 8 all action on the left flank, brought about through the enemy landing, had been terminated.

In the meantime, stronger and stronger contacts were being made in the right sector of the beachhead as the Marines drove farther inland. Fresh Japanese troops had been rushed into the area, moving in along the East-West trail from the Tekessi River into the Torokina area. Around the forks of the Piva River the enemy attempted to halt the steady Marine advance. On November 14, after a wild and sometimes confusing battle in which Marine tanks entered the picture, elements of the 3d Marine Division overcame strong Japanese resistance in a coconut grove a short distance south of the junction of the Numa-Numa and East-West trails.

As the Marines in the right sector ground out a steady advance in the face of increasing opposition, the Army's 37th Infantry Division came ashore in echelons to take control gradually of the relatively quiet left sector. Under orders from the I Marine Amphibious Corps, troops of the 37th, engaged in their second action in the Solomons, pushed their lines forward through the jungles, making only scattered contacts with small and virtually ineffective groups of Japanese.

Heavy preparation fires paved the way for a new Marine attempt to push through determined Japanese resistance near the forks of the Piva River on November 24. Accurately placed enemy artillery fire, answering U.S. concentrations, slowed the drive during its opening phases. In spite of the intense shellings, the Marines ground out small but significant gains during the day. By the following afternoon the



Japanese strength in the area had been broken and the enemy troops withdrew eastward across the Torokina River.

Advances continued in both division sectors against now scattered opposition as the 37th Division, by November 23, reached its final defensive line and began to consolidate its gains.

For a while the Marines experienced relatively easy going in the right of the beachhead, reaching the crest of strategic Hill 608 in early December. Later, as Marine riflemen moved down the eastern slopes of the ridge a strong Japanese force suddenly halted their advance. A series of concerted attempts to dislodge the enemy from the stronghold on the knob was now undertaken.

It was not until December 18, after a long chain of attacks and counterattacks by U.S. and Japanese troops, that the last of the defenders had been driven from the knob. Here the battle for what was called Fry's Nose saw Marine paratroopers overcome the last vestiges of organized resistance in this sector.

With this, the final defensive lines in the Marine sector had been established. To the south, around toward the beach, other Marine units had pushed generally eastward toward the Torokina River, halting at the edge of a swamp some distance west of the river's mouth.

In an effort to keep informed of Japanese activity in and around the mouth of the Torokina, the 3d Marine Division planned an outpost on the beach at the mouth. On December 7 Company A, 145th Infantry, attached to the 3d Marine Division from the 37th Division, occupied positions on the west bank of the river. The new outpost was subsequently maintained at company strength as security patrols scoured the immediate area. Only scattered contacts were made since the Japanese seemed more concerned with Marine activities to the north.

On December 15, in the midst of the battle on Fry's Nose, control of operations on Bougainville passed from the I Marine Amphibious Corps to the Army's XIV Corps, now under the command of Maj. Gen. Oscar W. Griswold. At this same time, plans were being completed for the relief of the 3d Marine Division, debilitated by the exhausting actions in the damp, dense undergrowth.

While Marine and Army riflemen were extending the perimeter through the thick, muck-clogged jungles, Navy construction crews were hard at work. Along the beach to the east of Cape Torokina 100-foot trees and interwoven brush rapidly disappeared before the saws, machetes, dynamite and bulldozers of the tireless Seabees. By December 10, after a month's work, the new Torokina fighter strip was placed in operation

as the first Wildcats landed to organize their base. U.S. airpower was now established only 254 miles from Rabaul, key Japanese Empire target in the Southwest Pacific.

Meanwhile, farther inland, work was being rushed on another fighter strip and a large bomber strip on ground that once had been smothered with thick tropical growth. These two additional bases were to spell doom for the Japanese and were to mean the virtual end for Rabaul as an efficiently operating enemy base.

On Christmas morning, after a quiet voyage from Viti Levu, the 164th Infantry, the main force in the first echelon of Americal Division troops, began debarking from transports at anchor in Empress Augusta Bay. Under Col. Crump Garvin, the veteran North Dakota infantrymen moved into an assembly area beyond the beach while final preparations were being made for the commitment.

Shortly, the 164th marched out along broad, sandy Major Fissell Highway to Evansville to undertake the relief of the 9th Marines on the left flank of the 3d Marine Division. The relief completed by December 28, the now static lines of the 164th Infantry extended from the right flank of the 37th Division's 129th Infantry, five hundred yards south and east of Lake Kathleen, to the left flank of the 21st Marines, the 3d Division's center regiment, and included Hill 608 and Fry's Nose, now dubbed Snuffy's Nose. In moving his regiment into the lines, the North Dakotans' commander employed his 1st Battalion on the regimental right, the 3d Battalion in the middle and the 2d on the left.

Meanwhile, other first-echelon detachments of the Division set about the task of preparing areas for their units. Pioneer crews from the 245th Field Artillery, aided by the 57th Engineers, cleared fields of fire for their 105mm howitzers by leveling underbrush and blasting down tall trees over a wide area. Artillery survey crews set up transits, aiming stakes and stadia rods as they quickly extended survey control into positions assigned the battalions.

On December 28 the second echelon steamed through the reef around Empress Augusta Bay and soon moved across the beaches into designated assembly areas. The 245th Field Artillery moved almost directly into its gun positions while the 182d Infantry, commanded by Col. William D. Long, halted to make arrangements for the relief of other troops of the 3d Marine Division on the perimeter.

By the evening of January 2, 1944, the Massachusetts regiment had moved through Evansville to complete the relief of the 21st Marines on the right of the 164th Infantry. The 182d Infantry lines now extended

eastward and then southward to Hill 270, at the left flank of elements of the 2d Marine Raider Battalion.

Arriving on Bougainville on January 9, the 132d Infantry, commanded by Col. Joseph K. Bush, less its 1st Battalion, almost immediately undertook the relief of the 3d Battalion, 1st Marine Parachute Battalion, and the 3d Battalion, 2d Marine Raider Battalion, in the sector to the south of the 182d Infantry. After completing the relief on January 11, the Illinois infantrymen found themselves along a line running south for 1,500 yards from a point just below Hill 270, then west and south through the jungles at the edge of a swamp, emerging on the beach of the bay some thousand yards east of the mouth of the Piva River.

By December 31 the 245th Field Artillery had taken over direct support of the 164th Infantry from the 4th Battalion, 12th Marines. The relieved artillery battalion now displaced to positions later to be occupied by the 247th Field Artillery, assuming the role of general support in the east sector.

The 246th Field Artillery, moving into positions adjacent to the 245th on January 9, registered on the following morning and soon took over direct support of the 182d Infantry from the 12th Marines' 1st Battalion. Five days later, the 247th moved into positions occupied by the 4th Battalion, 12th Marines, and assumed direct support missions for the 132d Infantry, firing from emplacements 1,500 yards northeast of the east end of the Torokina fighter strip.

On January 14 the 221st Field Artillery trucks pulled the old 155mm howitzers of the medium battalion into battery positions a thousand yards north of the 247th to register and take over all general support missions for Americal Division Artillery.

With the exception of those officers and men of the Division with the rear echelon now established on Guadalcanal, all troops of the Americal were on Bougainville by the late evening of January 12. The arrival of the 1st Battalion, 132d Infantry, on this date brought the infantry strength to its peak.

The 21st Reconnaissance Troop, entering combat for the first time under this new designation, organized a base camp off Marine Drive, a short distance across the muddy Piva River. Operating directly under Division control, these veterans of the old Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron were soon to begin extensive long-range patrolling outside the perimeter.

Meanwhile, the Americal Division command post had been set up near Marine Drive, approximately two thousand yards south of the

east end of the clearing in which the island's bomber strip was rapidly taking shape. In the same area the Americal Division Artillery command post was also being organized. Housing experts working on the installations were featuring elaborate dugouts, comfortable and practically bombproof, in which work could be carried on under any conditions.

When the balance of active power swung from Marine to Army units in the east sector of the perimeter, Maj. Gen. John R. Hodge, Commanding General of the Americal, assumed control of all combat activities within the sector, relieving the commander of the 3d Marine Division.

The general mission of XIV Corps, of which the Americal was again an active part, was different from that which might have been expected in connection with the grand-scale counteroffensive being put forth by U.S. forces in the Pacific. From positions now occupied by the Americal Division and the 37th Infantry Division, the corps was to defend the perimeter which had been laid out by blood and force around the air fields now either completed or near completion. The main line of resistance—the front line—was to be held at all costs regardless of the intensity of future Japanese attacks in order that heavy aerial pressure could be brought to bear on the enemy bases at Rabaul and Kavieng. The fulfillment of this seemingly simple mission was to require strong, aggressive, intensive patrolling to the front at all times in an effort to be forewarned of enemy attempts to crack U.S. defenses.

Security patrols were dispatched daily to check along the front lines for telltale signs of Japanese infiltration attempts: footprints, cut wires, dropped equipment and broken branches. Reconnaissance patrols, in the strength of at least one platoon, moved farther into the interior to probe the narrow, muddy trails northeast and east of the perimeter in the Division's zone of action.

Patrol complications developed early in operations of the 164th Infantry outside of the lines on the Americal's left flank. Given instructions to shoot on sight any creature seen wearing a helmet outside of the perimeter, the North Dakota patrols were ready to do just this. Not aware of the instructions given the Americal, 37th Division patrols donned helmets for their forays outside the lines. All went well until two patrols met near the boundary between the two divisions. The 164th Infantry patrol made the first visual contact, catching sight of helmets moving through the undergrowth. Fortunately, before a murderous hail of fire was let loose, the face of the lead scout of the 37th Division patrol was recognized as being far more Occidental than Oriental, and fire was withheld while the two groups talked over the situation.

In order now to prevent accidental bloodshed in shoot-first-and-ask-afterward fights between patrols from the two divisions operating along or near the boundary, it was decided that no helmets would be worn by either group. Since the Japanese almost always wore helmets in the jungles, the order originally issued concerning firing on wearers of helmets outside the lines could still remain in effect.

Veteran Americal infantrymen had found that the heavy helmets were more of a hindrance than a help in the jungles. Patrols attempting to slip quietly along the narrow trails found that vines and branches snapped against the helmets with a ring that could be heard for yards around. In addition, sounds echoed under the "eaves" of the helmets, masking the true direction from which the often informative sounds had come. To replace the neck-tiring "tin-hats" of war, fatigue hats and mechanics' caps became the normal item of headgear throughout the Division.

Moving generally northeast of their positions, troops of the 164th Infantry ranged far out and down across the flatlands to the forward slopes of Hills 1111, 1000, 600 and 250, the peaks of all of which overlooked the U.S. beachhead and the beehive of activity within it. The 182d Infantry hustled patrols out across the Torokina River and along much of the East-West trail, aggressively searching for signs of Japanese activity.

Almost as soon as the 132d Infantry had completed the relief of the Marines on the right flank of the Americal, patrols were sent forward to the west bank of the Torokina to determine the best future position for the regimental right flank. The low, swampy ground offered little in the way of high terrain on which to prepare adequate emplacements. Every effort was being made to establish a line somewhere near the river.

On January 17 the 2d Battalion of the 132d set up a forward command post in light jungle bordering the beach six hundred yards northwest of the river mouth, sending Company G farther down the coast toward the river at the jungle fringe. After a series of moves, Company G finally organized defenses three hundred yards east of the river, with a reinforced platoon combat outpost another sixty yards east of this. By January 19, after some extensive scouting, Company F set up a line extending 1,500 yards north along the west bank of the broad river bed from the beach. By January 24 sufficient dry ground had been found to warrant a forward displacement of the crooked lines to the edge of the river, but some emplacements on the right flank along the

beach were on such low ground that all construction work had to be done above ground.

Before this, on January 6, a quiet shifting of lines had been completed along the boundary between the Americal and the 37th Division. In this movement, which took on all semblances of full-scale action, the 164th committed its 2d Battalion with orders to push up over Hill 700, the highest ground in the immediate area. Within five days, encountering no opposition from the Japanese, the battalion pushed forward a thousand yards through almost impenetrable undergrowth and up steep slopes to gain the crest of Hill 700. After the ground had been gained and consolidated, the 164th's 2d Battalion was relieved by elements of the 37th's 145th Infantry, resulting in a displacement of the Division boundary a distance of more than a mile to the east.

In one of the first heavy patrol clashes of the campaign in the Americal's zone of action, a reconnaissance-in-force group of more than a hundred officers and men of the 164th Infantry's 1st Battalion headed on the morning of January 7 toward Hill 250, three thousand yards to the northeast. The patrol halted some distance short of the hill in the late morning to allow forward observers from the 245th Field Artillery to adjust fire behind the hill. At about 1300, bent upon scouting the territory to the north of the hill, the lead scouts began to move around the eastern slopes of the hill along the banks of the Torokina. Quickly, contact was made with the enemy and the entire east slope of the hill to the left of the North Dakotans erupted in a hail of fire from all types of enemy weapons.

Taking advantage of the initial confusion caused by the sudden bursts of fire against the Americans, the Japanese circled around behind the patrol, cutting off its route of withdrawal and forcing it to fight with its back to the Torokina. For more than two hours the fight continued until finally the troops of the 164th's 1st Battalion forced the Japanese to draw back from their trail block. The patrol now cautiously withdrew under fire, moving carefully back down the trail behind the perimeter, on the lookout for possible ambushes. In the action which temporarily placed these men of the 164th Infantry in danger of annihilation at the hands of capable Japanese, twelve enemy had been killed and as many more had been known to be wounded. The cost to the Americal Division patrol, strangely enough, was but four wounded, only one of whom required hospitalization.

On January 10, a patrol from Company L of the 182d Infantry, moving along the East-West trail across the Torokina River, made contact with

strong Japanese positions 1,500 yards east of the river bank. First scouting, then attacking, the Bay Staters struck hard at the positions, fought bitterly for a short period and then withdrew with but light casualties. The Japanese suffered the loss of twenty-five killed and an unestimated number wounded.

In the 182d Infantry sector west of the Torokina stood Hill 260, some eight hundred yards outside the main line of resistance which skirted near the west bank of Eagle Creek. On January 12 the regimental commander ordered a reinforced platoon to the hill to establish an outpost and a series of observation posts from which the Torokina crossing of the East-West trail could be clearly seen. Observation parties from the 246th Field Artillery later set up a new position in the top of a 125-foot banyan tree, offering an excellent, unobstructed view of further reaches of the East-West trail and of hundreds of thousands of square yards of jungle in all directions.

Fighter planes and dive bombers based on Bougainville's new airfields supported patrol activities in both division sectors as they strafed and bombed enemy positions located by ground units. In air attacks against targets in other parts of the island, Navy and Marine planes disrupted communications, blasted supply dumps, sank small coastwise vessels and smashed at troop bivouacs. And as work continued on the new airstrips and as the number of planes based on the island increased, the tempo of attacks on Rabaul and Kavieng was stepped up.

Japanese air attacks, intensive during the early days of the campaign, were now on the wane. As enemy losses mounted, the raids became more and more feeble and were soon reduced to mere nuisance value during the hours of darkness. Even the nuisance raids, however, could cause damage and casualties, for bombs dropped anywhere within the perimeter could well hit some vital installation.

Such a thing did happen early on the morning of January 23 within the Americal Division sector. At least a pair of Japanese twin-engined bombers droned back and forth over the perimeter during the dark of a moonless night. One let loose a string of bombs which fell in the midst of the Division command post. Three bombs made shambles of the office tents of the chief of staff and the G-2 and completely wrecked the quarters in which General Hodge, General McCulloch and a number of staff officers lived. One enlisted man was killed in his foxhole; damage to equipment was extensive.

The 245th Field Artillery also suffered from this raid when another twin-engined bomber dumped its load after being caught in a search-

light beam. A dozen or more "daisy cutters" cut a path of debris through the battalion's Headquarters Battery, killing one enlisted man, wounding another, frightening a hundred more, and destroying and damaging tents, trucks, trailers and official papers.

Taking part in its first campaign, the Americal's "Air Force," born of a pair of foundling L-4s at Nandi in the Fijis and infused with new blood by the arrival of more pilots in January, was soon active in aerial support of infantry patrol actions in the Division's zone. Borrowing several Cubs from the 37th Division Artillery's air observation section, the Americal's pilots set to work, flying from dawn to dusk reconnoitering the area and adjusting fire on targets of opportunity.

Patrol actions continued outside the lines. On January 17 patrols from the 164th Infantry, investigating the results of air strikes in the vicinity of the forks of the Torokina and near the southeast slopes of Hill 600, made contacts with groups of Japanese totalling the strength of at least one infantry battalion. The main elements of the 1st Battalion's three rifle companies, reinforced by Company F, moved into the area to strike at these positions. By January 19 the riflemen had done their work and were withdrawing under heavy artillery fire after having killed at least forty-five enemy.

On January 24, 132d Infantry patrols operating out of the Company G beachhead across the mouth of the Torokina River ran into a series of concealed Japanese positions some distance to the east. On the following morning, preceded by a heavy thirty-minute artillery preparation, fire from attached mortars of Company D, 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion, and a shelling by 3-inch guns on two LCI gunboats, Company G advanced some 350 yards in the face of the most determined resistance yet encountered on the beaches in this area. Strongly emplaced enemy troops employed small arms, machine guns and potent 90mm mortars in an effort to stall the 132d Infantry drive. By the evening of January 25 a number of the positions had been overrun and an undetermined number of Japanese had been killed or wounded.

In the meantime, the 182d Infantry was continuing to make strong contacts in the sector surrounding the East-West trail. Supported by accurate fire from the 246th Field Artillery, adjusted by forward observers with forward elements of the patrols, troops of the Massachusetts regiment were clashing with large and powerful groups of enemy and were recording impressive victories.

On January 29 plans were made for an all-out attack eastward from the Illinois regiment's extended bridgehead across the Torokina's mouth.

The attack on the following morning was to feature the first appearance of Army tanks in the Solomons as the 754th Tank Battalion, with the Americal on New Caledonia, attached a number of its armored vehicles to the 132d. All available howitzers from Division Artillery were to be pointed toward the objective to lay down a merciless barrage. The 4.2-inch mortars of the 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion's Company D were to add their power to the preparatory fires. In being assigned to make the assault, Company C of the 132d was given instructions to clean out an area three hundred yards square to the east of the bridgehead lines.

The company was to strike along the beach and turn inland to the edge of the jungle. In the tall grass and heavy undergrowth the Japanese had constructed positions on dry soil varying in depth from forty to four hundred yards inland to the fringe of a broad morass which precluded flanking the enemy positions from the north. A frontal attack was the only means available as a solution to the difficult problem of reducing these positions.

At 0830, in the wake of a tremendous artillery and mortar preparation, the attack moved out as riflemen of Company C and supporting tanks of the 754th Tank Battalion crossed the line of departure. Almost immediately, however, determined enemy resistance stalled the advance as intense rifle, light and heavy machine-gun and mortar fire inflicted serious casualties on the company. The tanks, buttoned up for protection against small-arms fire, were unable to locate the trouble spots to the front and left. Then, into the action stepped one man, a noncommissioned officer of the 132d's Company B, and, inspired by the outstandingly courageous achievements which followed, the attack was soon resumed and carried to a successful conclusion.

The enlisted man, Staff Sgt. Jessie R. Drowley, of Luzerne, Michigan, had been placed in charge of one section of the main line, under instructions to hold the perimeter and to act as a reserve group leader if required. As the action developed before his eyes, he saw three men of Company C fall not far from his position. The heavy hostile fire kept aid from reaching these wounded men.

Sensing that these men might die without immediate medical aid, the sergeant dashed out into the heavy fire toward them. He quickly dragged and carried two of them to safety and succeeded in getting help for the third. While near the stricken men, the squad leader discovered the location of a pair of enemy pillboxes which had been holding up Company C's attacks. Leaving one of his men to take the last wounded

man to shelter, Sergeant Drowley now took upon himself new and more dangerous tasks.

Racing out across open terrain in full view of the enemy, he reached one of the tanks and attracted the attention of its crew by signalling. Vaulting to the top of the tank, he talked to the tank commander through the hatch, telling him that he could direct the armored vehicle to the two enemy positions. Remaining exposed on top of the tank, Drowley exchanged his weapon for a sub-machine gun loaded with tracer ammunition which the crew in the buttoned-up tank could readily follow.

As the tank waddled across the sands toward the Japanese emplacements, heavy bursts of enemy machine-gun and rifle fire slammed against its sides. Round after round caromed and ricocheted off the turret behind which the sergeant crouched. By voice and by tracer fire, he directed the tank to within twenty feet of the first pillbox before the crew could see the position. In the furious exchange of fire which followed, Drowley suffered a severe chest wound.

Stubbornly refusing to withdraw to have his wound treated, the intrepid sergeant remained on the top of the tank, directing the fire and movement of the tank. Again the Japanese struck their nemesis, this time in the left eye, and the sergeant toppled from the turret. Staggering to his feet, he stood alongside the tank until both pillboxes had been knocked out.

Only now, with his courageous, voluntary mission successfully completed, did Sergeant Drowley return to the lines for treatment of his serious wounds. Far above and beyond the call of duty, this man had suddenly thrust himself into the stalemate and by his own stubborn determination had turned the tide of battle in favor of his battalion and his regiment.

For his most extraordinary heroism in this action, Sergeant Drowley was subsequently awarded the Medal of Honor, becoming the only soldier in the Americal Division to be so honored. After recuperating from his wounds in the continental United States, he was presented with the Nation's highest military award by the late President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, in a simple but impressive White House ceremony.

Awed and inspired by this action which the mere term "brave" hardly describes, Company C renewed its assault on the enemy positions in the area. With the two most troublesome pillboxes eliminated through the sergeant's fortitude, the riflemen and the supporting tanks pushed through the area in the face of now less intense, but still deadly, enemy fire. By

nightfall on January 30 the assault forces had destroyed nineteen more pillboxes and had routed or killed all of the Japanese occupants. The company had suffered serious casualties, many of whom fell in the opening minutes of the attack. The 754th Tank Battalion had lost two tanks, one to enemy action, and one which became mired in the soft sand along the beach.

The attack, however successful, proved costly to both the 132d Infantry and the Americal Division headquarters. Included in the list of those killed in action on January 30 were Lt. Col. James L. Grier, executive officer of the 132d, and Lt. Col. Donald G. M. Matheson, Australian Imperial Forces, long attached to Division headquarters as liaison officer.

Colonel Matheson, commander of the Australian Commandos in New Caledonia in early 1942, had been with Division headquarters since its activation. On Guadalcanal he had led many long-range patrols which had gained much valuable information in forays far behind the enemy lines. With the Americal in a somewhat similar capacity, he was on the scene during Company C's assault to witness the first Army infantry-tank action in the Solomons. He gave his life going to the aid of several officers and men who had been seriously wounded by Japanese sniper fire.

Colonel Grier, like his Australian comrade-in-arms, was also killed while aiding the wounded infantrymen. The 132d Infantry especially felt the loss of this most capable officer.

As January gave way to February, patrols from all three of the Americal's regiments probed ever deeper into Japanese-held territory outside the perimeter, aggressively engaging large and small groups of enemy in fire fights which were proving more costly to the enemy than to the Americans. Patrols from the 21st Reconnaissance Troop ranged far to the east of the Torokina River, scouting enemy positions and bivouacs near Hills 500 and 501, gathering vitally needed bits of information concerning Japanese strength and dispositions.

Patrol reports, supplemented by information obtained from prisoners of war, now indicated that the Japanese held a strong series of outposts to the east and northeast of the Americal's main line of resistance. On the left flank of this broken line was the strongly held beach village of Mavavia, three thousand yards east of the Torokina, a point beyond which 132d Infantry patrols were now unable to advance. Other strong positions had been located in the vicinity of Hills 500 and 501, north of Mavavia. The line now turned westward along the East-West trail for a short

distance before breaking north across the jungles toward Hill 250, on the west bank of the Torokina, near the river's forks. From here a series of outposts was constantly being kept in contact by Americal Division patrols to the west and northwest on Hills 600, 1000 and 1111.

Based on a statement of a Japanese prisoner that the Japanese 6th Division was to attack the U.S. lines sometime in March, no further extension of the perimeter was planned. Instead, patrols continued to operate outside of the perimeter in search of information behind what was now considered to be a covering screen set up to mask Japanese movements in preparation for the attack.

To the Americal Division's left, in the sector of the 37th Division, attempts were also being made to determine the intentions of Japanese to the north and northwest. Patrols operated far inland up the Numa-Numa trail and also pushed on up the west coast as far as Kuraio Mission, more than twenty miles northwest of the perimeter. Like the Americal, the veteran Buckeye Division was adding hundreds of names to the Japanese casualty lists at but slight cost to attacking infantrymen.

Operating under control of XIV Corps at this time were troops of the 1st Fiji Infantry Regiment. These crack soldiers, trained in their native islands, had adapted their natural ease in the jungles to wartime needs and were now being employed on long-range combat and reconnaissance missions. Almost completely at home in the dense, damp undergrowth with which Bougainville teems, these dark-skinned Fijians terrorized the Japanese by day and night attacks.

Late in December 1943 reports were received concerning a possible enemy movement from southern Bougainville along the east coast of the island. In order to learn more about this possibility, a reinforced company of Fiji infantrymen was sent to Ibu, some twenty miles generally north of Cape Torokina. The company was to establish an outpost at Ibu and was to patrol the east coast in the vicinity of Numa-Numa, make note of all enemy activities and apparent intentions, harass lines of communication and destroy as many Japanese as possible.

By January 2, 1944, the group was well established at the Ibu outpost and had initiated a detailed reconnaissance of the coast from Asitavi Mission to Kiviri Point. In a series of fire fights with the enemy in this area twenty Japanese were killed. Small outposts and ambushes were set up in order to meet the threat of Japanese counterattacks. In an attack on a Japanese strongpoint at Pipipaia, forty-seven enemy were killed without loss on the part of the Fijians.

The Americal Division Artillery's Cubs played an important part in this operation when a small airstrip suitable for these light planes was hacked out of the jungle at Ibu by the Fijians. This field, located on the eastern slopes of the Crown Prince Range, eight miles from Mount Balbi, proved valuable to the outpost as a means of rapidly delivering emergency messages and orders and of evacuating sick and wounded.

Lieutenant Charles W. Cross, one of the two original liaison pilots assigned to the Division, took over most of the runs to the positions from the perimeter, crossing Japanese-held jungles and high, rugged mountains to do so. Between January 15 and January 26 Lieutenant Cross made an even dozen trips to Ibu. On January 27, while returning on his thirteenth trip, carrying a Fijian officer as his passenger, a heavy tropical rainstorm caused him to crash in the jungle. Concerted efforts were made to find the wreckage by aerial reconnaissance, but finally the pilot and his passenger were given up as lost.

It was not until the Fijian officer, several weeks later, staggered into a coastal mission northwest of the perimeter that the full story came to light. After having rested and recuperated to some degree, the officer gave his account of the crash and the events which followed.

Neither Lieutenant Cross nor the Fijian were more than shaken by the crash, but the plane and its radio were destroyed beyond repair. Although both men were lightly clothed and ill equipped for such an emergency, they headed generally westward in the direction of the coast, hoping to be picked up there. It was not long until the pilot, weakened by illness and the lack of food, slowed down and almost stopped. The Fijian carried him for great distances through the maze of tropical trees and shrubs, weakening himself in so doing. After several days of this, the pair decided to rest, forage for some food in the jungle and regain their strength.

Instead, Lieutenant Cross became increasingly weaker, so weak, in fact, that he was virtually unable to move. Sensing that he was sacrificing the life of his companion by asking him to stay, he insisted that the Fijian leave him and head for the coast in an effort to send or bring aid. Twice the Fijian left and twice he returned to the stricken pilot's side. The third time, however, he kept going after having made the lieutenant as comfortable as possible.

After several days he reached the coastal mission, stammered out his tale and asked that help be sent. With the assistance of the Fijian a party searched for the airman, but no trace of him was found. It was

later assumed that the Fijian, weakened by his ordeal, became confused in his wanderings toward the coast and forgot the route he had taken, thus eliminating any hope of finding Lieutenant Cross.

As a result, the Division Artillery pilot's name remained on the list of those missing in action. A short time later, for his intrepid work in support of the Ibu outpost, Lieutenant Cross was awarded the Air Medal in one of the first such citations in the Division.

Meanwhile, near the end of January the Japanese began moving reinforcements into the Ibu area, intent upon driving the tricky Fiji infantrymen back to the perimeter. On February 14 a strong enemy bayonet attack on a roadblock near Ibu laid bare the threat that the outpost might be outflanked by a numerically superior force. A slow and deliberate withdrawal back to the coast was now ordered, deliberate in the hope that the enemy might be drawn into a series of traps laid along the route. By February 19, after having fought a series of planned rear-guard actions in the Ibu-Sisivie area, the force reached the west coast where a covering beachhead had been established by the 37th Reconnaissance Troop. During this successful withdrawal the troops of the 1st Fiji Infantry Regiment had killed more than 120 Japanese and only one Fijian had been slightly wounded.

Relatively new to the regiments of the Americal in combat now were ambush patrols and sniper patrols which silently stalked the trails in search of unwary Japanese. Composed of small groups of keen-eyed marksmen, these "snooper" patrols, as they were called, were assigned the twin missions of noting all enemy actions in their areas and of killing as many enemy as possible without excessive risk to their own safety. In one such engagement on February 16 Pfc. Sebastian B. Porretto of Brooklyn, a member of a 164th Infantry patrol, definitely killed fourteen Japanese and very probably killed two more with just eighteen rounds of ammunition. When asked by his superiors to account for his two missing rounds, Porretto's answer was straight and to the point: "Hell," he said, "two of 'em got chicken and ducked just as I fired!"

After the middle of February the Japanese intensified their own patrol activity in the Americal Division sector. All indications pointed toward the arrival of reinforcements in the area surrounding the XIV Corps perimeter. Larger groups of enemy were being spotted moving through the jungles as artillery battalions poured thousands of rounds of high explosives into suspected or definitely located bivouac areas. On February 24 a patrol from the 182d Infantry killed a Japanese

officer near the East-West trail and forwarded his dispatch case to Division headquarters with startling results.

The slain Japanese officer was identified through personal papers as an artillery survey officer. In his dispatch case were field orders issued to artillery units of the Japanese 6th Division and the Japanese 17th Army. The orders specified the position areas for batteries and battalions to occupy in and around Hills 500 and 501 and in this broad general area. The papers also identified U.S. targets within the perimeter which were to be taken under fire by these enemy guns and howitzers.

Rather than take these areas under fire before they had been occupied, it was decided in Americal Division and Division Artillery headquarters to allow the Japanese to complete preparations and to move the weapons into place. The areas were plotted on all battalion fire charts with orders to smother them on call from the Division Artillery S-3's fire direction center. The first sign of enemy firing from the positions would bring a heavy series of concentrations down on the entire sector, adding more damage than could be done by firing on the unoccupied positions now.

A new prisoner of war brought more news of the coming drive on the part of troops of the Japanese 17th Army. In an interrogation by Nisei interpreters and language officers at Division headquarters, the enemy soldier stated that the 6th Division's 13th, 23d and 45th Infantry Regiments had moved across to the west side of the Saua River, some six thousand yards generally east of the Torokina. He added that the attack might be made against the U.S. lines in the early days of March.

Out in Empress Augusta Bay, two thousand yards south of Mavavia, lie a pair of small coral islands known as the Magine Islands. These tiny bits of land offered the Japanese an excellent view of a long stretch of beach behind the Americal Division right flank, but, at the same time, they were so positioned as to grant the American forces an even better observation post flanking the Japanese outpost line which emerged on the beach at Mavavia.

Without opposition on the morning of February 27 elements of the 21st Reconnaissance Troop seized Greater Magine, the western island of the pair. No enemy were found on this island or on Lesser Magine, four hundred yards across a little lagoon to the east.

Defensive positions were quickly constructed to ward off any Japanese amphibious counterattack. Two 75mm self-propelled guns were brought from the perimeter and set up to lay flanking fire on enemy positions on the beaches to the north and northeast.

In new and more intense air strikes, Marine and Navy planes bombed and strafed Japanese installations around the island, while others occupied themselves with raids on enemy positions near the perimeter. On March 1, in a concerted attempt to break up the attack before it started, 120 SBDs and 72 TBFs dropped eighty-nine tons of bombs on enemy troop concentrations and supply dumps at the headwaters of the Torokina River, near the base of Mount Bagana, the active volcano six miles northeast of the perimeter.

In preparation for the expected enemy attacks, all front-line positions were ordered strengthened and improved. New mazes of barbed wire were set up in front of the lines and improvised sounding devices of all kinds were rigged to warn infantrymen of enemy tampering under cover of darkness. Booby traps were set out on all key trails leading to the lines.

Within the perimeter reserve lines were laid out and positions were hastily constructed. Fire lanes were cleared in front of each reserve line and additional entanglements of barbed wire erected. Provisional infantry battalions were formed from elements of ground forces and service troops. Navy and Marine units prepared for close-in defense of the three airfields, knowing that these would be the principal Japanese objectives should the main line be pierced.

On March 3 the infantry regiments of the Division were reinforced by the arrival of their new organic cannon companies. Fresh from post-activation training in the United States, these units were quickly assigned positions near the lines, emplacing their 75mm field howitzers, highly mobile counterparts of the pack howitzers, in the most advantageous spots. Trained to fire either under the direct supervision of the infantry commanders or as a fourth battery for the supporting field artillery battalions, these untried companies were to prove most useful and most versatile in the days not far ahead.

As the early days of March sped past, more and more enemy activity was being reported in both division sectors. Units of the 37th Division reported increased Japanese strength along the Laruma River, six thousand yards from the Ohio lines. Back in the Americal Division sector on March 6 a brief flurry of enemy mortar fire fell on 132d Infantry positions, but no damage or casualties resulted. All artillery units within the perimeter pounded ceaselessly at known or suspected enemy troops in bivouac and at all known routes of advance open to the Japanese. Through the moonlit nights brilliant flashes of fire signalled continued harassing fires being laid upon the troops of the Japanese 17th Army.

Dusk of March 7 found all units of the Americal within the lines, awaiting the first major Japanese moves. Patrols were scheduled for the following morning as efforts were still being made to fully determine the enemy intentions. The first signs of movement against the perimeter were expected at any time. All eyes of the Americal Division were on the alert.

General Hodge could now look around his sector of the perimeter and see that all was in readiness. On the left flank the 164th Infantry had committed its 3d Battalion on the regimental left and the 1st Battalion on the right. Continuing on around to the right, he could see the 182d Infantry's 1st and 3d Battalions on the line in that order. On the Division right the 132d Infantry had its 3d and 2d Battalions on the line.

On Hill 260, outside the lines of the 182d, troops of the Bay Staters' 2d Battalion manned the vital outpost guarding the observation posts and the approaches to the main line of resistance. Across the Torokina one company from the 132d stood guard on the lines around the bridgehead. On the Magines, elements of the 21st Reconnaissance Troop were set to repel any amphibious assault on the tiny coral islands.

In reserve in their parent regimental areas were the 182d's 2d Battalion and the 1st Battalion, 132d Infantry. Held in Division reserve at this time, in bivouac near the 21st Reconnaissance Troop base camp, was the 164th Infantry's 2d Battalion.

Waiting for developments in positions first occupied on arrival on Bougainville, the three direct-support artillery battalions and the general-support battalion laid plans for close-in defensive fires in front of the main line of resistance as well as in front of each of the reserve lines to be manned in the event of a Japanese penetration of the perimeter. Planning for virtually every eventuality, new battalion gun positions were also located close to the beach in preparation for possible withdrawals from positions which might become untenable.

During all of the hurried defensive preparations, the 57th Engineers had cleared acres of jungles for the regimental reserve lines. Road maintenance crews worked from dawn to dusk to keep the Division's roadnet open and functioning. New roads were pushed toward the front lines, setting up new and shorter supply routes and avenues of evacuation for wounded.

Almost daily rains hampered these operations and many more as infantrymen, artillerymen, engineers, signalmen, and a host of service troops hustled to lay the groundwork for a determined defense which might soon follow.

The night of March 7 settled quietly over the perimeter. A light rain dripped through the tall trees, cooling the breezes which stirred the foliage. Men settled back in dugouts and foxhole "homes" to await developments. In the Americal Division sector and all around the perimeter a full alert was on. A night of watchful waiting was in store. A day of significant developments lay ahead.

“*Hold At All Costs*”

THE DEATHLY SILENCE WHICH HUNG OVER THE XIV CORPS PERIMETER at Empress Augusta Bay during the early morning hours of March 8 was broken only by the continual thundering of U.S. howitzers harassing Japanese troop concentrations and movements. All along the lines of the Americal Division, on the 182d Infantry outpost on Hill 260 and at the 132d Infantry bridgehead across the mouth of the Torokina, infantrymen and artillerymen peered into a black wall of darkness, on the alert for signs of enemy movement. Ears strained to hear the telltale clinking of metal against metal, the swish of branches and vines and the snapping of dead twigs on the trails. But all was quiet in the inky jungle night, and all remained so until about 0600.

As the first faint fingers of dawn daubed the skies to the east beyond complacently puffing Mount Bagana, the Japanese made their first move. From prepared positions around Hills 65, 500 and 501, enemy 10cm and 15cm guns and howitzers opened fire on the perimeter with amazing accuracy. In a short time reports of enemy shellfire were pouring into G-2's office from all units of the Division. The airfields, the artillery positions, the supply dumps and the main road junctions were all under heavy fire.

As the whine of incoming shells and the *karoumps* of their explosions awakened the perimeter, U.S. guns and howitzers barked and roared in answer to the Japanese challenge. Wire maintenance crews from the 26th Signal Company and from wire sections of other units of the Americal hustled out into the thick pattern of shellfire to repair cut and damaged telephone lines. Engineers cranked up engines to move out and fill up shell craters on the vital roads. Within a matter of minutes the entire perimeter flamed into activity.

Initially, artillery observation posts along the lines were unable to locate flashes of any of the enemy guns, but sounds of heavy firing could be heard in the east across the Torokina. All four battalions of Division

Artillery quickly laid their howitzers on the known position areas around Hills 65, 500 and 501 and let loose with tremendous concentrations in an effort to silence the potent enemy field pieces. Simultaneously, the 37th Division Artillery commenced smoking Hills 600, 1000 and 1111 to cut off enemy observation of the perimeter from this strategic high ground.

Surprisingly, reports from observation posts soon indicated that the Japanese, too, were employing a great number of light howitzers in well concealed positions on the forward slopes of Hills 600 and 1111, the hills now being screened by the 37th Division. It had been thought a physical impossibility for the Japanese to have moved such cumbersome weapons over these rugged, jungled mountains and to have emplaced them as they apparently had.

Quickly, the 37th Division screening missions were cancelled as Americal Division howitzers swung in the direction of the hill mass. Methodically, by single guns, sections, batteries and battalions heavy concentrations of counterbattery fire were adjusted on the positions by forward observers at vantage points along the 164th Infantry lines. Before long, the fire from these Japanese pillboxes had dwindled to a sporadic "shoot-and-hide" system as every effort was being made to keep the Americans from discovering the exact locations of the positions. Meanwhile, the 155mm guns of XIV Corps Artillery continued with the neutralization of the enemy guns and howitzers to the east, soon forcing them to resort to intermittent firing only.

The eyes of the artillery—the Cubs—had taken to the air as soon as there had been sufficient daylight to warrant their doing so. Many positions were located and destroyed by pilots and observers who soared over the area. Throughout the day the planes flitted back and forth over enemy-held territory in search of more positions. Adjustments were made on many a suspicious clearing in the relatively flat land to the east, the sector in which much of the aerial observation missions were carried out.

Powerful air strikes were quickly organized by Navy and Marine air units as the security of their air bases was being threatened. During the day 108 SBDs and 48 TBFs struck at the Japanese gun positions on Hills 600 and 1111. The Bougainville-based missions required but a few minutes from takeoff time to landing time, going on record as among the shortest missions flown in the Pacific. Other Marine and Navy planes roared up from Munda and Guadalcanal to help with the bombing and strafing.

The 164th Infantry's Cannon Company, veterans of nearly five full days on the island, found many choice targets on which to demonstrate

the effectiveness of their training. The company's almost direct counter-battery fire is believed to have silenced several of the 70mm and 75mm guns in action to the northeast.

By noon on March 8 the Japanese artillery fire had almost ceased completely, but Americal Division Artillery units continued to blast away at the areas from which they had been firing. At dusk, sensing that counterbattery fire would be difficult, the Japanese opened fire again, but the barrage lacked the intensity of the surprising volleys of the early morning.

It is difficult, even now, to determine anything near the exact number of rounds that fell within the perimeter on March 8. Sketchy reports show figures which range from two hundred to two thousand, the latter estimate being more nearly correct. The only information taken from Japanese sources—data contained in the records of the 7th Battery, 6th Field Artillery Regiment, 6th Division—showed that this one two-gun battery fired 304 rounds into the perimeter on this day. Using the information as a guide, and taking into consideration the total number of guns available to the enemy on the opening day of the artillery duels, it is not unreasonable to assume that some three thousand rounds fell among U.S. positions and installations during the day.

In answer to the enemy fire, the Americal Division Artillery's four battalions erupted in a day-long shoot which featured switching and relieving of gun crews in order to keep the 105s and 155s in action. By midnight of March 8, indicative of the amount of firing done by all four units, the 245th Field Artillery reported having expended 3,228 rounds of 105mm ammunition on 23 fire missions, while the 246th put forth 3,120 rounds on approximately the same number of missions.

While shells whizzed and whined over their heads going into and coming from the perimeter, patrols from all three regiments of the Americal cautiously moved out into the constantly dark, damp, evil-looking jungles. Each group was now especially alert and watchful; enemy infantry units might be moving on the perimeter along any of the many narrow trails. During the afternoon a long-range 21st Reconnaissance Troop patrol operating around Hill 500 and the Saua River, a hotbed of enemy activity, killed two of a dozen enemy seen and confirmed reports of increased activity. Similar contacts were reported to XIV Corps intelligence officers by the 37th Division after all of its patrols had reported.

As darkness fell over the perimeter on March 8, counterbattery missions were replaced by all-night harassing fires which were moved

from one area to another. Flashes and roars of the guns broke the darkness and stillness of the tropical evening.

At about 0230 on the morning of March 9 elements of the 2d Battalion, 145th Infantry, holding the right flank of the 37th Division, established contact with a Japanese infiltration party at the barbed-wire entanglement. After several enemy were slain inside the wire, the battalion shuddered under the full force of a powerful attack. At dawn it was found that the Japanese had forced a wedge in the positions of Company G and that they now held the north slope and the crest of Hill 700. Without delay, reserves were hurried into the area and counter-attack plans hastily prepared.

Had it not been for the displacement of the boundary between the 37th Division and the Americal, this action might now be taking place in the Americal Division sector. Troops of the 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry, aware of the happenings to their left, increased their day and night vigilance to be prepared for an attack which might spread over into the North Dakotans' zone.

By the evening of March 9, attacks of the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 145th had succeeded in regaining several of the pillboxes on the left of the Japanese assault force. More than fifty enemy died in the day's action in which tanks of the 754th Tank Battalion lumbered onto the scene.

During the day in the Americal Division's zone of action patrols once again moved out to reconnoiter the front. One 164th Infantry patrol ran into a group of fifty Japanese near the banks of the Torokina River, five hundred yards northeast of Hill 260. Two of the enemy were killed in the exchange of fire and a pair of machine guns and one mortar were put out of action.

At 1940 on March 9, just as darkness spread its mantle over the lines, Company G of the 182d Infantry, outposting Hill 260, was subjected to a short but intense concentration of rifle, machine-gun and mortar fire from what was estimated to be a platoon of Japanese. When artillery and mortar fire was adjusted on the enemy force the fire ceased as suddenly as it had begun.

The Japanese cannoneers broke into action at dawn on March 9 to begin another day of duels with the U.S. gunners. From around Hills 65, 500 and 501 fire was received from new positions, at first difficult to locate. This would seem to show that the enemy was now hoping to survive by constant fire and movement in the area.

In the air 24 SBDs and 12 TBFs again plastered Hills 600 and 1111,

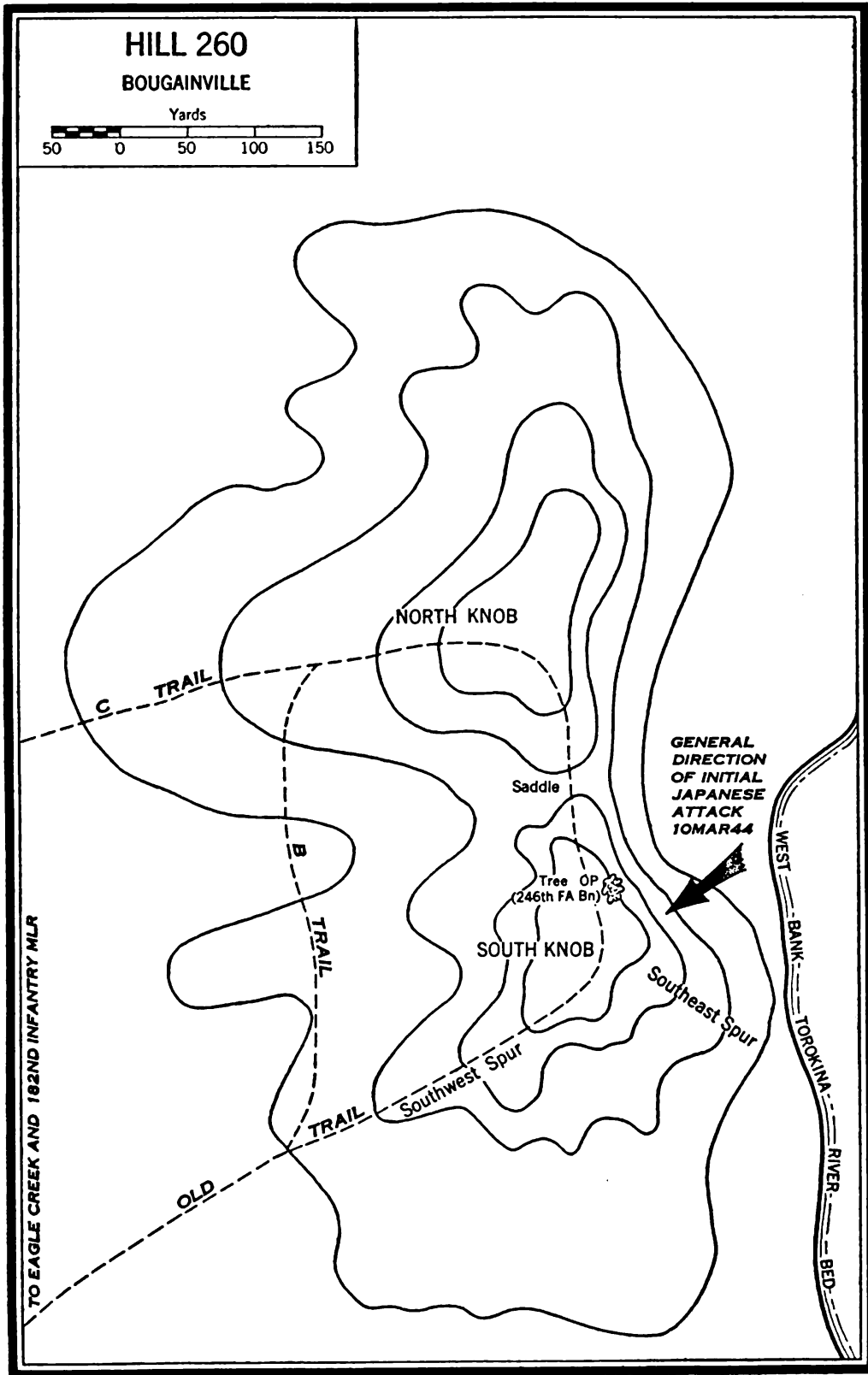
scoring probable hits and damaging near-misses on several of the more stubborn positions. Destroyers moved down the coast behind the Marines to pepper the Hills 65-500-501 area from the south.

During the early morning hours of March 10, elements of the Japanese 13th Infantry Regiment got ready for their first move against the positions of the Americal Division. Slipping into position under cover of darkness, the Japanese faced forward for a strong thrust against the outpost on Hill 260, held now by a reinforced platoon from Company G of the 182d Infantry.

While these events were shaping up in the headquarters of the Japanese 6th Division, Lt. Gen. Masatame Kanda, its commander, decided that it would be wise to issue a message of exhortation to his troops. Their morale was low after their comrades had been defeated on Guadalcanal and in the New Georgia group, and it needed boosting. Reminding his men of the background of the 6th Division, poetic General Kanda wrote:

"To avenge our mortification since Guadalcanal
Will be our duty true and supreme.
Strike, strike, and strike again,
Until our enemy is humbled forevermore.
Brighten with the blood of American devils
The color of the renowned insignia on our arms.
The cry of our victory at Torokina Bay
Shall resound to the shores of our beloved Nippon.
"We are invincible.
No foe can equal our might.
To attain our aims we must always attack,
And our enemies we must smite.
Danger comes soonest when it is despised.
Caution and prudence will bring no grief.
Serve in silence and bear no pain.
The shame of our souls will give us strength.
To preserve our nation and our glory."

General Kanda's poetic efforts must have borne fruit, for Hill 260 was soon to become an arena of blood and anguish. At 0630 on March 10 word was received by Col. William D. Long, commander of the 182d Infantry, that the entire outpost on the hill was under extremely heavy mortar and machine-gun fire from the east. Five minutes later reports of concentrated attacks began pouring into the regimental command post.



Striking up the steepest slope, one which was almost perpendicular, an estimated reinforced Japanese company quickly pierced the defense near the base of the 125-foot banyan tree used as an observation post by the 246th Field Artillery. Pouring rapidly through the breach, the enemy split the small garrison into two groups. But that many of the Bay Staters, carrying out their commander's orders to hold their ground, were able to stand fast in spite of intensity of the attack is evidenced by the fact that several groups of riflemen were rescued from the midst of the Japanese after days and nights of hell on the knob.

Hill 260 itself was thick with vegetation, a twin-peaked piece of high ground which, from above, looks much like an hourglass. Situated on the west bank of the Torokina 7,500 yards from the mouth of the river, the hill barely measured 850 yards from its northern slopes to the foot of its southern approaches. At its widest point, the hill, which ran north and south, spread not more than 450 yards to the west of the river bank.

Some eight hundred yards to the west of the hill lay the 182d Infantry's main line of resistance, but between the hill and the lines ran little but important Eagle Creek, an excellent natural protective moat of which the Bay Staters were taking advantage. In addition to offering a commanding position near the front lines, the hill also overlooked Hill 309 directly to the south and Hill 608 to the northwest.

In outpostting the hill in January, the 182d Infantry selected the south knob as the most important of the pair of peaks, and patrolled continuously around the hill and its other, unoccupied knob. The Japanese might have been able to reach the crest of the north knob with little or no opposition, but in their attack they chose to strike directly at the small U.S. garrison, moving up a precipitous northeast slope to do so.

Now, even before he had gained control of the south portion of hill, the regimental commander ordered Lt. Col. Dexter Lowry, commander of the 182d's 2d Battalion, to recapture the hill with all possible haste. U.S. countermoves swiftly followed.

Company F was hurriedly dispatched to the north end of Hill 260 where contact was made with a portion of the original garrison still doggedly clinging to the upper end of the outpost perimeter. Here a stronger line was now established in an effort to ward off any Japanese movement up from the south.

As the grim battle got under way, Maj. Gen. John R. Hodge, commander of the Americal, sent his Assistant Division Commander, Brig. Gen. William A. McCulloch, to the 182d Infantry command post to take

command of subsequent operations against the determined Japanese. Establishing his own command post in that of the Massachusetts regiment, General McCulloch quickly reviewed the situation and prepared plans for counterattacks.

In an effort to dislodge the Japanese before they could consolidate their gains and commit reinforcements, Company E was sent into action with orders to strike the south knob from the southwest. At 1045, in conjunction with an attack from the north by a platoon from Company F, one platoon from Company E started up the southwest slope of the hill.

During the early moments of the twin attacks, both platoons were held to short gains as extremely intense rifle and machine-gun fire burst out from the enemy-held knob. In an effort to gain ground in a significant amount before nightfall, the remainder of Company E was committed. One platoon was sent north to contact Company F and assist in a thrust from the upper end of the hourglass hill. Another platoon from Company E was sent around to the south and east of the hill with instructions to attack up the gradual southeast approaches to the old outpost.

At 1445 the new two-company attack was let loose in full force after mortar and artillery fire had been poured onto the top of the hill. Some local successes were reported early in the afternoon's fighting, but in general, the going was rough. By 1900 the increasing darkness precluded any further gains and all of Company E's forces were regrouped on the southwest slope to form a perimeter for the night.

Before the late afternoon attacks from the southeast got under way, a flamethrower was called for by one of the platoon leaders. Hearing that none was available because every trained operator had been wounded and evacuated from the hill, Sgt. Clifford Denslow, a mortar-crew chief, asked that he be given a chance to fill in. The battalion commander personally hurried the native of Dearborn, Michigan, through a whirlwind course of instruction in the use of the flamethrower and sent him on his way. Supporting the subsequent attack, Denslow burned out one pillbox, exhausted his supply of fuel, enthusiastically hurried back for another load, and returned to the platoon in time to destroy a second emplacement before the attack was halted.

The first day of the battle for control of 260 seemed to indicate that original estimates of the strength of the Japanese had been extremely low. First guesses set the attackers' strength at that of a reinforced company; perhaps this may have been true. But it became apparent as the minutes and the hours passed on March 10 that more Japanese had reached the hill and had moved into positions from which they were to stoutly defend

their gains. Late estimates of the strength at the close of the day's actions set at least two reinforced Japanese companies on the hill, with, perhaps, more than an entire battalion spread out in an area once occupied by one reinforced platoon from the 182d.

From here on, it was now certain that the recapture of the hill would be a difficult task. The Japanese held the advantages of previously well prepared positions and of commanding views of the terrain over which the attacking Bay Staters would have to move. To withdraw from the area and allow the Japanese to retain control of the hill might result in pressure being brought to bear on the 182d Infantry lines, on Hill 309 and on Snuffy's Nose, the eastern spur of the 164th Infantry lines.

At 2100 the Japanese, noted for night attacks, pushed north from their lines in an attempt to gain control of the north knob. Determined resistance by men of Company F beat off the fierce close-in bayonet attack. Almost two hours of hand-to-hand combat cost the Japanese heavily. When the assault was withdrawn it was found that the Company F perimeter was intact and that American casualties had been relatively light.

Under a heavy artillery bombardment by gun crews of the 246th Field Artillery who worked around the clock, the Japanese rushed in reinforcements. Additional machine-guns and heavy weapons were hurried into position by the enemy in order to push back new Americal Division thrusts against the hill which they knew would follow.

On the morning of March 11 fresh Japanese troops drove down the southeast slope of the hill in an all-out attack on Company E, then already weakened by heavy casualties suffered the previous day. In spite of all serious efforts, the Japanese, with the support of heavy weapons fired from the crest of the hill, could not pierce the company perimeter. Before the attack was ground to a halt and pushed back, twenty Japanese were slain and many more wounded.

During the height of this attack Staff Sgt. Shigeru Yamashita, of Overton, Nevada, a Nisei interpreter-translator assigned to the Americal Division's G-2 section, risked death or capture and subsequent torture at the hands of the Japanese when he attempted to identify the enemy units occupying Hill 260. Unmindful of the intense enemy fire, Yamashita crossed the barbed wire to examine bodies of Japanese dead and to determine whether it would be possible to capture any of the enemy wounded for interrogation. Only after he was certain that he had exhausted every available source of information did this soldier return to safety behind the U.S. lines.

The halt after the early morning attack was but a brief one. A new

downpour of machine-gun and mortar fire signalled a renewed attack on the company positions. Once again Company E held against the tremendous enemy pressure even though the company strength was being rapidly drained dry. Counting noses after the second assault was beaten back, the wounded but still active company commander found that he could call on but twenty-four enlisted men, a number of whom, too, had been wounded but were still anxious to stick it out. The fury of the battle had cleared much of the dense vegetation from around the company perimeter and the small group was now exposed to the full view and the deadly plunging fire of the Japanese on the south knob.

Shortly after the second Japanese attack the remainder of Company G was sent out from the perimeter to reinforce the beleaguered company and to launch a counterattack from the southwest. Just as H-hour for the new thrust neared, the Japanese struck again, this time from the southeast. This new development seriously threatened the encirclement of both companies and the severance of their lines of communication and evacuation. Rather than risk this during a determined stand at their present positions, both companies were ordered to withdraw. Company G was sent to join Company F on the north knob of 260 while Company E, under the leadership of a wounded commander, returned to the perimeter for rest and reorganization.

Because it was thought that breaking contact with the Japanese might have been rather difficult during this new attack, additional reinforcements were needed. After having been relieved on the lines by Company B of the 57th Engineers, the 182d's Company B moved out to join the fight. Once the break was successfully completed, trail blocks were established on an old trail leading southwest and south of 260 and another between the hill and Eagle Creek.

Available reserves presented no little problem to the Americal Division in this rapidly developing stalemate. In the first two days of the Division's counterthrusts against the enemy on Hill 260 much of the strength of the 182d's 2d Battalion had been depleted. With pressure being exerted on the 37th Division to the west of the perimeter, the Americal's reserve battalion (the 2d of the 164th Infantry) had been taken from the Division and designated XIV Corps reserve. To the south, in 132d Infantry reserve, lay the Illinois regiment's 1st Battalion, the only unit not committed entirely on main-line positions or in action outside the perimeter. It was even required that combat engineers be used in order to allow rifle companies of the 182d to move out against the Japanese.

Rescue of the wounded under fire was a serious problem, one which ever required the utmost in determination and self-sacrifice. That this was true was exemplified in the actions of Pvt. Donald B. Blaisdell of the 57th Engineers, on March 12. Blaisdell, a native of New Auburn, Wisconsin, with an unidentified companion, voluntarily moved into the path of heavy enemy fire to effect the rescue of a wounded soldier who lay on the enemy's side of the barbed wire around Hill 260. As the intrepid pair attempted to raise the wounded soldier over the wire Blaisdell's companion was killed. Apparently undaunted by the developments, the young engineer returned to the lines and obtained the aid of a second soldier who subsequently met his death while moving the soldier to safer ground on the American side of the wire. Still determined to fulfill his mission, Blaisdell returned to the lines once more, obtained the aid of a third man, and at last succeeded in carrying the stricken soldier back to safety for treatment. As well as being a tribute to Blaisdell's persistence, the record of the heroic deed in which four men eventually participated is more than ample testimony of the unselfishness with which two of the four men gave their lives that another might live.

On the afternoon of March 12 a new attack, preceded by a heavy concentration of mortar and artillery fire, was launched by Company B of the 182d. Striking from the north and northwest of the old outpost, the company was able to grind out an advance of a few precious yards while suffering heavy casualties. Once the bits of ground had been gained, however, the regiment had no spare troops to rush into the area to consolidate its gains. Consequently, it was decided to commit Company A of the 132d Infantry, now attached to the 182d.

Under instructions from Lt. Col. William J. Mahoney, now in command of operations against the hill, the new company reached Eagle Creek at 1700. It was doubtful whether the men would be able to reach the north knob of 260 before dark, but the seriousness of the situation seemed to rule that the company move out without delay. Orders were now issued for the troops to push up the hill from the southwest and to tie in with the 182d's Company B which, by this time, had been able to force a deep wedge into the strongly held enemy perimeter.

As the Illinois men, new to this static battle of attacks and counter-attacks, hustled up the slopes of the hill, the entire company came under a heavy concentration of enemy fire. Casualties were numerous in the first few moments, the very first being the company commander. This strong and sudden Japanese opposition so delayed progress that it

became apparent that the company could not reach its assigned positions before dark. There now remained only the slimmest of chances that contact would be made with Company B.

Meanwhile, Company B, pushing down from the north and northwest, was taking casualties in increasing numbers as a strong penetration of the enemy defenses was being made. Although exhausted by the day's action, it was felt that the company would be able to hold the ground gained if the Japanese were to counterattack in force. But still reinforcements were sorely needed to exploit the gains made. The situation to the southwest seemed to preclude their arrival, however. At last, therefore, the painful decision was made to relinquish the ground gained under cover of darkness as a means of conserving troop strength. Unable to fulfill its mission because of Japanese resistance, Company A of the 132d, at the same time, was ordered to withdraw to the perimeter.

On March 13 the attacks against the firmly entrenched enemy were resumed as two companies of the 1st Battalion, 132d Infantry, took over the operations. The commander of the 1st Battalion, Major Raymond E. Daehler, assumed control of the area in place of Colonel Mahoney who returned to the perimeter with his troops of the 182d.

In the renewed attacks Company A of the 132d, after cutting a new trail up the rear of the north knob of the hill, struck southward along the narrow saddle and ran headlong into the enemy's outer defenses. Simultaneously, Company B assaulted the southwest slopes in the face of heavy enemy counterfire, fanned out to the left and by 1200 had gained sufficient ground to reach halfway up the hill. Against both threats the Japanese threw out the full force of all available rifles, grenades, automatic weapons and light and heavy mortars, causing heavy casualties in both companies.

During the early part of the afternoon the enemy struck back at Company B, attempting to envelop the extended left flank of the company. By mid-afternoon the Japanese counterthrust had been beaten back after which the company paused to reorganize.

In the meantime, Company A, closing with the enemy in its attack, was halted by fanatical resistance. Strongly holding their ground against several minor hostile attacks, the men of the company began consolidating their gains. However, as had happened on the previous afternoon, no fresh troops were available for reinforcements and by nightfall both companies of the 132d had begun a reluctant withdrawal to safer ground.

On March 15, after the previous day's activities had repeated those of March 13, Company A of the 132d succeeded in reaching the crest

of the south knob after penetrating the outer enemy positions. Flame-throwers were hastily brought into action and several pillboxes were burned out and destroyed. Again lacking available reserve forces, the troops were required to withdraw before dark. Strangely enough, however, Company A's casualties had been very light during the day; only one officer and eight enlisted men had been wounded in action in spite of the fact that this deep penetration into the Japanese perimeter had been made.

Concern for the welfare of others at the risk of one's own life was repeatedly shown during the most bitter moments of the battle, but a spur-of-the-moment act which brought Pfc. Jay F. Swenson the Distinguished Service Cross ranks high among those in official records. Carrying rations to the assault companies on March 15, Swenson, a native of Fairview, Utah, together with several companions, suddenly came under an intense mortar barrage which rocked the entire area. Just after the group had taken cover in an open foxhole a projectile from an enemy mortar plunged into the hole. Completely disregarding his own personal safety, Swenson threw himself on the shell a fraction of a second before it exploded. By absorbing the full force of the blast with his body he was seriously wounded, but none of his companions was hurt.

This day brought the first prisoner from the enemy lines as the tide seemed to turn in U.S. favor. During the interrogation which followed, the Japanese soldier indicated that repeated assaults and tremendously heavy mortar and artillery barrages were now seriously weakening the enemy garrison on the south knob. It was apparent to both the 182d and the 132d, however, that, although the hostile force was losing men each day, the fire power on the hill had not decreased noticeably. The enemy seemed to be successfully masking the increasing losses under a steady hail of lead and steel.

Reviewing the toll of casualties suffered during the repeated attacks on the hill, General Hodge, the Americal's commander, now felt that further assaults could not be made without dangerously weakening the defenses on the vital main line of resistance. He noted that the attacks of both the 182d and 132d Infantry Regiments had forced the enemy to abandon any offensive plans he might have made in favor of a strong defense on the ground he had taken.

As a result, through Lt. Col. Jacob S. Sauer, the Division G-3, General Hodge directed that no new general attacks would be made. Instead, the enemy garrison was to be contained through continual harassing and

neutralization fire by the 246th Field Artillery and by supporting mortars of Companies D and H of the 182d and Company A, 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion. Small infantry groups were to attempt to work into the Japanese positions during lulls in this fire, destroying installations and killing as many of the enemy as possible. Strong patrols were to be dispatched to cover all slopes of the hill, cutting off enemy attempts to withdraw the garrison or reinforce it. Our troops were to install trail blocks to cope with any direct enemy move against the main line of resistance.

While the fury of the battle for Hill 260 was expending itself in the shell-stripped jungles along the west bank of the Torokina River, Japanese artillerymen continued to pound at many targets within the perimeter. Americal Division Artillery counterbattery missions occupied most of the time around the clock for all battalions except the 182d's direct-support battalion, the 246th Field Artillery.

Supporting artillery missions over the entire Division zone of operations the Americal's Cubs soared back and forth over enemy artillery position areas picking out many guns as they fired. Covering operation on Hill 260, the light planes searched approach trails from the air trying to pick up movements of reinforcements. Against the advice and wishes of members of his staff, Brig. Gen. William C. Dunckel, commander of Division Artillery, riding Cubs as an observer, made some of the most important aerial adjustments in the Hill 260 area.

In an effort to blast the Japanese gun positions in the Hill 600-1111 area with a more potent weapon, one 155mm howitzer from Battery C, 221st Field Artillery, was moved into the area occupied by the 245th Field Artillery. Direct observation of the target area from the gun positions allowed precision registrations to be made from the rear of the howitzer itself. "Piva Pete," as the aged howitzer was named by its crew, scored many impressive target hits during its stay with the 245th and knocked out several enemy field pieces.

To the left, in the sector of the 37th Division, other infantry units of the Japanese 6th Division were active as they attempted to crack the U.S. perimeter in this zone of action. On March 10, supported by powerful air strikes by SBDs and TBFs, attacks were resumed against the crest of Hill 700, still held by strong enemy forces. Elements of the 145th Infantry, using bazookas and bangalore torpedoes, failed to dislodge the Japanese during early attacks. Later, at 1700, elements of two battalions of the 145th Infantry smashed back at the stubborn enemy and by dark recaptured all but about forty yards of the original lines.

In the Americal Division sector on March 10 twenty-four B-25s peppered Hills 500 and 501 with groups of fragmentation bombs at 0730 and then returned to strafe the entire area. At 1015 thirty-six SBDs and thirty-four TBFs dive-bombed and glide-bombed hostile positions near Hill 1000, followed later in the morning with a strike against Hill 250 by eighteen SBDs and as many TBFs. Shortly after noon, another two dozen B-25s returned to the Hill 500-501 sector with more fragmentation bombs. A pair of destroyers bombarded this same area after the Mitchells had left, inflicting more damage and casualties. The day's hectic activities in the air were climaxed with a 55-plane strike by SBDs as this same Hill 500 area took another thorough pasting from U.S. bombs and bullets.

Through the morning of March 13 the struggle for supremacy in the area around the 37th Division right flank continued, with Japanese attacks being decisively turned back. It was not until the afternoon of March 12 that all of Hill 700 was once again in U.S. hands. A last effort was made by the Japanese in the same general area at 0300 on March 13, but this, too, was thwarted by the Ohio infantrymen.

However, enemy attacks spread around to the left, to the 129th Infantry, in the center of the 37th Division line. Just before dawn on March 13 an all-night series of bursts of Japanese fire turned into a full-scale assault. By 0730 six pillboxes in the sector of the 129th Infantry's 2d Battalion had been taken. A day-long fight soon got under way as elements of the 754th Tank Battalion entered the picture in support roles.

By 1000 on the following morning the last enemy-held pillbox had been reduced and the lines were reestablished. The silence which hung over the lines during the rest of the day and the night was merely the lull before another storm.

At 0400 on March 15 hordes of Japanese swarmed into the lines of Company F, 129th Infantry, and within six hours had driven a hundred yards into the 2d Battalion sector. At 1500 a counterattack by elements of the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 129th, supported by a platoon of tanks, was turned back. Leading elements in the counterattacking forces found that the Japanese were quickly digging in and were running in heavy weapons with all possible haste.

An hour and a half later, following a heavy concentration of artillery thrown into the salient by the combined power of units of the 37th Division and the Americal's artillery, a new counterattack was initiated. By nightfall, after some of the most furious fighting seen on the island,

the entire enemy penetration had been reduced. Nearly two hundred enemy dead were found and buried in the Company F area.

Meanwhile, the potent fire power of 90mm antiaircraft guns was being brought to bear on Japanese artillery emplacements on Hills 600 and 1111. With sniper-like accuracy, four of these guns, emplaced along the 164th Infantry's lines, quickly silenced a number of Japanese weapons in short, one-sided duels. On one occasion, a 90mm round struck an ammunition dump on Hill 600 and set off an explosion which cleared trees and shrubs from around several nearby positions.

Back near the Torokina River, however, Hill 260 and the reduction of the Japanese garrison on its south knob continued to occupy much of the attention of the Americal Division. On March 16 Company B, 182d Infantry, exhausted from its actions around the hill, was relieved and sent back to take up positions on the perimeter. Company B, 57th Engineers, now moved to positions in the rear of the 182d's main line. At this same time, Company G of the 182d took over trail security in the area from the 164th Infantry's Company G, allowing the latter unit to move back to its parent battalion in XIV Corps reserve.

Not satisfied with the defeat handed them by the 129th Infantry previously, the Japanese struck again in this same sector at 0400 on March 17. Relentlessly pouring men at the lines, the enemy again forced a breach and thrust a wedge into the area seventy-five yards deep. By 0950 the perimeter was restored through a heavy infantry-tank attack which cost the Japanese more than a hundred dead.

The continued peppering of the Japanese garrison on Hill 260 by units of the 132d and 182d Infantry Regiments was now seen to be weakening the enemy. Noting this, General McCulloch laid plans for a new series of assaults against the south knob, feeling that the time was at hand for the death blow.

On the morning of March 18 Company A, 132d Infantry, struck from the north along the saddle in conjunction with an attack by the regiment's Company B. The latter company, splitting into a trio of strong assault forces, drove against the enemy stronghold from the southwest, the south and the southeast. At 1430, after two of Company B's three prongs had been driven to within twenty-five yards of the crest of the hill, heavy bursts of counterfire forced the attacks to halt. Two hours later the company was forced to withdraw for reorganization and redistribution of strength. In the meantime, Company A had made some small but significant gains, but darkness forced the company to give them up.

At 1410 on the following day, in the wake of heavy artillery preparation fires, Company A once again moved south along the saddle while Company B set out under the previous day's plan of action. Heavy knee-mortar fire inflicted serious casualties on both companies as early gains were being reported. Company A, after reaching the outer defenses, was again held up by strong bursts of small-arms fire and by many well placed hand grenades. Despite this, flamethrowers were rushed into action and several pillboxes were destroyed.

In a cool display of courage and skill during the morning, Staff Sgt. Frank F. Castano, of Jackson Heights, New York, a medical aid man with the 132d Infantry, snatched a seriously wounded rifleman from the jaws of death close to an active enemy position. Without the benefit and comfort of covering fire from his own comrades Castano, who was eventually decorated several times and later commissioned, crawled, ran and stumbled to within ten yards of a Japanese pillbox to join the wounded soldier who lay exposed to the full view of the enemy. Completely disregarding his own safety, Castano calmly proceeded to staunch a profuse hemorrhage in his patient's leg and then dragged and carried the man back through zones of intense enemy fire to waiting litter bearers.

During the afternoon Company B was able to report some success while struggling up the slopes of the hill. At 1835 the enemy showed the first signs of breaking although supporting knee-mortar fire was still intense and accurate. A reinforced platoon from the 182d Infantry was hustled into the area to take advantage of developments, but it arrived too late to be of service since darkness precluded further offensive action. At 2100 Company B withdrew a short distance down the hill after having destroyed three pillboxes at the edge of the enemy defenses.

Realizing now that the Japanese were strongest at those points on the small perimeter which had been under almost continuous attack since March 11, General McCulloch ordered a new thrust to be made from the rear of the hill. Consequently, at 0845 on the morning of March 20, the 132d Infantry's Company B began circling the south end of 260. The short movement around the base of the south knob was made through dense undergrowth cluttered with debris scattered in all directions by stray artillery and mortar rounds. In spite of the difficulties imposed on them by the terrain and by an almost continuous peppering by enemy rifle and mortar fire, the company reached the Japanese trail leading up to Hill 260 shortly before 1200. A single

platoon from Company A was attached to the company with instructions to attack along the left flank of Company B, thereby relieving some of the enemy pressure.

During the early part of the afternoon Company B, technically reinforced but actually greatly under strength, attacked Hill 260 from the east. Enemy fire from this side was as strong as any encountered in previous attacks from the north and the southwest. Far below the minimum strength required for efficient combat action, the force was withdrawn at 1720 and moved back to the perimeter. Companies A and B now reverted to the control of the 132d Infantry and were ordered to return to their base camp for a rest.

In action against the Japanese on Hill 260, both companies continued to attack numerically superior forces in the face of the most intense defensive fire. The two units had killed more than 120 Japanese and had knocked out many key pillboxes. Several times, in determined drives up the slopes, elements of both companies had penetrated the outer Japanese defenses only to be forced to withdraw when darkness fell.

On March 21, as the fight to regain control of Hill 260 was carried on in his regimental sector, Colonel Long, commander of the 182d Infantry, was ordered transferred to USAFISPA headquarters. It was with reluctance that Colonel Long turned over his command to Lt. Col. Floyd E. Dunn at a time when the recapture of Hill 260 was not yet completed. While awaiting transportation to his new assignment, Colonel Long remained at the 182d Infantry command post to keep abreast of late developments in the situation.

With the few available reserves now worn and exhausted, the activities around Hill 260 could only settle down to a systematic stabbing at the Japanese positions. Supporting mortars and artillery pounded the now nearly bare hill. Though patrols and small attacking parties reported no apparent decrease in fire power on the south knob, it was felt that the enemy's strength was rapidly diminishing.

During their defense of Hill 260, the Japanese resorted to one act of treachery in order to inflict additional casualties on the American. On March 22 a Japanese soldier cried out from a pillbox during the height of an attack by elements of Company F, 182d Infantry. Quickly, the platoon commander ordered fire withheld while an investigation was begun.

Shortly a half-dozen Japanese appeared on and behind the pillbox, in full view of the Bay Staters. A Japanese-speaking American officer ordered them to throw up their hands and surrender, as the platoon

commander motioned for them to come away from the emplacement and move toward the U.S. positions. Suddenly, all six dropped back into the pillbox and opened fire on the exposed infantrymen. Waiting for the surrender which they came to expect, an officer and two enlisted men were killed by this treacherous act.

Continuing with what had been their standard practice for several previous days, three patrols from the 182d Infantry moved out to the base of Hill 260 on the morning of March 28. On this morning, however, as the rays from the early sun slanted down through the naked trees and vines, there hung over the hill a deathly silence, broken only by the whine of the Americal's shells en route to targets in the jungles beyond. From the crest of the hill, blackened by flamethrowers in other assaults, there came none of the usual heavy defensive fires which had normally welcomed the Division patrols as they hiked into the area. This now seemed to be a silence which meant something more than a calm before a new storm of fighting.

Cautiously, the patrols inched up the slopes, suspecting the worst, but hoping for the best. Without incident the crest of the south knob was quickly reached and a careful pillbox search was instituted. A terrific stench of death and decay stung the nostrils of the alert infantrymen. At 1246, after no living enemy had been found on the high ground, a radio message back to the 182d Infantry command post reported that Hill 260 was again secure. The Japanese, it was thought, had fled during the night.

Meanwhile, as the grim struggle to capture Hill 260 from the enemy was being drawn to a close, activity increased again in the sector of the 37th Division's 129th Infantry. During the very early moments of March 24 small groups of enemy infiltrators set off a series of sporadic exchanges of small-arms fire which completely alerted that regiment's Company F. Just before daybreak a heavy enemy attack was launched against the company and the Japanese quickly forced a deep penetration of the lines. Before the assault could be contained, a salient three hundred yards in depth had been driven into the positions of the 129th. By 1400, however, after strong counterattacks which featured hole-to-hole fighting, the original lines were restored. At the end of the day, when all surviving Japanese had been eliminated, 310 enemy dead were counted within the 37th Division lines.

At 1500 on March 24, expecting a renewed attack on the following morning, the commanding general, XIV Corps, placed his reserve battalion, the 2d Battalion, 164th Infantry, under the operational control

of the commanding general, 37th Division, as a new and fresh counter-force. This battalion, led by Lt. Col. Samuel E. Gee, hurriedly moved to a bivouac area within the sector of the 129th Infantry, ready to move into action at a moment's notice.

On the morning of March 25, however, the Japanese were only mildly active. Spasmodic bursts of small-arms and light machine-gun fire were directed at the 129th Infantry's positions, but no attack followed. The 1st Battalion, Fiji Infantry Regiment, in a reconnaissance in force in front of the 129th's 2d Battalion, met strong Japanese defenses on high ground outside the main line. In an attack supported by artillery and mortars, the patrols drove the enemy from the positions and cleaned out an area some five hundred yards in depth in front of the perimeter.

This marked the last combat action on and immediately in front of the 37th Division lines. The Japanese had made their bid for success time and again, only to be beaten back on each occasion. Had the 37th Division not held, the picture in the Americal Division's sector might well have been different during these hectic days which were now passing.

With Hill 260's recapture now complete, the toll of casualties inflicted on the enemy could now be counted. Day-by-day tabulations in the office of Lt. Col. Richard H. Agnew, the Division G-2, showed that 541 Japanese had been reported killed by the 182d and 132d Infantry Regiments. However, a search of the hill on March 28 revealed the presence of only 212 bodies. The Japanese practice of either burying or carrying away their dead no doubt masked the true figure, hiding a list of names probably in excess of the 541 reported killed. It is estimated that these deaths, plus an uncounted number of wounded, resulted in the virtual elimination of at least one battalion of the Japanese 13th Infantry.

That the hill was recaptured only after a long period of bitter fighting serves only to enhance the traditions of the humble riflemen of the assault companies of both the 182d and 132d. Before the first few minutes of the battle for Hill 260 had passed into history, heroism became something routine.

Key target on Hill 260, both for the Japanese and for the men of the Americal, was the tall banyan tree which had held the 246th Field Artillery's observation post. After the Japanese gained control of the south knob, they prepared strong positions among the thick, many-fingered roots of the tree. As each new attack of the 182d and 132d Infantry Regiments came within range, flamethrower fire was directed against

the base of the tree until soon it had become a charred and blackened trunk. Flaming cans of gasoline were catapulted into the area with similar effects. Later assaults with fire so weakened the 125-foot giant that it toppled to the earth, leaving a 35-foot remnant sticking blackly into the sky. Even then, the Japanese doggedly stuck to the roots, resisting every attempt to dislodge them. This important tree, which once overlooked the jungles for many miles in all directions, was dubbed "the most expensive tree in the world."

Captured enemy documents translated before the all-out attacks on the perimeter indicated the tactical importance of Hill 260 as a stepping stone to Japanese success. Realizing that the enemy would most probably make an attempt to take the hill, the Commanding General of the Americal initially planned to withdraw the small garrison in the event of such an attack and to allow the Japanese to take the hill without determined American resistance.

This done, according to plan, all available mortars of the 182d Infantry and all howitzers of the 246th Field Artillery were to be turned against the hill, quickly transforming it into a veritable hell of bursting shells. Soon, it was thought, the hill would become untenable for the Japanese, and they would have to move in either of two directions: eastward back across the Torokina River from whence they would have come, or westward to the U.S. lines in a forced attack.

To cope with the second possibility, the 182d Infantry had strengthened the lines, presenting virtually impregnable positions. The Bay Staters were aided, too, by Eagle Creek, a natural moat, which lay between Hill 260 and the perimeter. To strike at the lines, the Japanese would have to move across the creek and into cleared fire lanes of the regiment's rifles and machine guns.

In a way, however, the Japanese foiled this plan by striking at the hill before daylight. Orders for the hill's garrison stipulated that the positions were to be held at all costs during any attack at night or before daylight. The garrison did attempt to obey these orders the morning of March 10 but the power of the enemy attack was too much for the reinforced platoon.

The original plan might still have been carried out had it not been for the fact that XIV Corps, shortly after the Japanese struck the hill, ordered that Hill 260 be held at all costs. By this time, however, the enemy assault force had gained too strong a foothold on the south knob to be driven off in quick time. In addition, the change in plans called for reinforcements which were actually too far distant—by about eight

hundred yards—from the scene of action to be of immediate aid to the garrison. In spite of the difficulties this imposed upon the Division by the new orders, all troops turned wholeheartedly to the task of regaining control of the hill.

The Commanding General's plan, though, could possibly have backfired had the Japanese, once on the hill, brought up far more reinforcements than they actually did during the battle. Free from all but mortar and artillery bombardments, a large and powerful enemy force based on or around the hill might well have brought tremendous pressure to bear on Snuffy's Nose, the eastern spur of Hill 608, to the northwest, or on Hill 270, to the south. Using Hill 260 as a base of fire, the Japanese could probably have attacked simultaneously several points along the perimeter and might have been able to force a penetration through typical Oriental determination.

Regardless of the merits of either plan, either that of the Americal's commander or that of XIV Corps, the battle for Hill 260 had been won, and at no slight cost to the Americal Division. The Japanese had been driven back across the Torokina River. Late combat instructions issued to the regiments were to unfold new chapters in the Division's history. Much remained to be done on Bougainville and no time was wasted in getting to the tasks now assigned.

At 0800 on March 29 control of barren Hill 260 passed to the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry, now operating under the control of the Americal Division. This battalion, the first unit of Negro infantry troops committed to action in the Pacific, was subsequently attached to the 182d Infantry as it relieved the Bay Staters' 2d Battalion on the once bitterly contested hill.

The Expanding Outpost Line

THE LAST DAYS OF THE GRIM MONTH OF MARCH, FEATURED BY the sudden Japanese withdrawal from Hill 260, now brought about an abrupt change in the tactics of the Americal Division. At first primarily concerned with the defense of the main line of resistance around Bougainville's three strategically important airfields, the mission of the regiments and the supporting arms and services now became in a certain sense an offensive one.

On the morning of March 29 patrols hurried out of the perimeter in pursuit of the fleeing Japanese, bent upon inflicting as much damage to the enemy units as possible. At 1600 one group from the 132d Infantry, operating in the area around Hill 501, struck at what was reported to be at least one Japanese battalion. Breaking contact as darkness fell, the forward observer with the Illinois patrol adjusted the fire of the 247th Field Artillery on the enemy battalion.

Early on the following morning, hoping to regain contact with the Japanese, the patrol moved back into the area. All the infantrymen found were the bodies of thirty enemy, many of whom showed signs of having been killed during the previous day's fight.

When one of the patrol's squad leaders was wounded close to the Japanese positions, Pfc. George A. Ligouri, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, the company aid man, set out to bind up the sergeant's wounds and help him back to the rear. Ligouri rushed forward during the thick of the fire fight and emptied his carbine into the pillbox that was threatening his safety and that of his fallen comrade. When his carbine jammed moments later he threw it to the ground, picked up the sergeant's rifle, and proceeded to silence the position. Then, having assured himself that his patient was reasonably safe, Ligouri rendered the necessary first aid to the stricken squad leader and carried him back to the patrol's positions.

Meanwhile, the 164th Infantry dispatched patrols to the north and

northeast, into the hills from which heavy Japanese artillery fire had been directed on the perimeter during the darkest days of the enemy assaults. One patrol pushed cautiously up the steep sides of Hill 250, an important hill near the forks of the Torokina River, and soon reached the crest of the hill without incident. On March 30 another patrol from the 164th encountered an enemy rifle company five hundred yards south of Hill 250 and, after a short fire fight, directed heavy artillery fire on the enemy force with telling effect.

To assist in the determined push out from the perimeter, the Americal Division could now call upon one attached regimental combat team. On March 28 the 25th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, part of the 93d Infantry Division, was placed under the operational control of the Commanding General of the Americal. This combat team, the second contingent of Negro troops sent into action against the Japanese, was made up of the 25th Infantry Regiment; the 593d Field Artillery Battalion; the 93d Reconnaissance Troop; Company A, 318th Engineer Combat Battalion; Company A and a platoon from Company D of the 318th Medical Battalion; and a detachment from the 793d Ordnance Light Maintenance Company. All of these units were under the command of Brig. Gen. Leonard R. Boyd, the 93d's assistant division commander.

Subsequently, one battalion of the 25th Infantry was attached to each of the Americal's three regiments for training and tactical employment. The 593d Field Artillery was placed under Americal Division Artillery control while the remaining units of the combat team were placed directly under Division headquarters.

On April 1 Maj. Gen. Robert B. McClure stepped into the Americal's command post to take over the Division from General Hodge. Reluctant to leave the unit which he had retrained on Fiji and guided through these hardest days of fighting on Bougainville, General Hodge revealed that his relief from the command was in the nature of a promotion. He was destined by the War Department to take command of the new XXIV Corps and to lead it through some of the most stirring battles of the closing months of the Pacific war.

On the first day of General McClure's command patrols from the Division again moved out along the narrow, muddy trails to the east and northeast of the perimeter. By nightfall of April 1 several new, sharp clashes were reported. Japanese casualty lists grew longer by the hour.

One patrol from the 164th Infantry, operating north of Hill 250, ran into a force of more than a hundred Japanese and halted to direct

artillery fire on the positions they held. So accurate and well placed was the fire that the enemy was forced to vacate the positions and move straight toward the patrol as a means of escape.

In the bitter engagement which followed when the hostile group ran headlong into the patrol more than sixteen enemy were killed. The Japanese, now decidedly confused and shaken by the chain of events, quickly broke contact and fled.

Meanwhile, a strong combat patrol from the 132d Infantry struck hard against enemy troops in position between Hills 500 and 501. Before breaking contact for the night the Illinois infantrymen had run up a toll of more than twenty enemy dead.

By the evening of April 2 the 2d Battalion, 164th Infantry, long since released from XIV Corps reserve, had established strong outposts on Hill 250 and on its precipitous neighbor, Hill 600. From the Hill 600 outpost battalion patrols began a systematic search of all trails leading northwest toward Hills 1000 and 1111. These patrols, together with others based within the perimeter, succeeded in locating practically all of the gun positions from which devastating artillery fire had been loosed against the Bougainville beachhead and airfields. Guns and howitzers not damaged by the counterbattery fire and the aerial bombings were destroyed by other units sent out for this purpose.

In patrol work on Hills 1000 and 1111 the men of the 164th gained much respect for the dogged determination of the Japanese soldiers who completed the back-breaking task of hauling the guns up over the steep trails and emplacing them secretly in positions on the forward slopes facing the U.S. lines. Such tenacity of purpose was typical of the enemy.

On April 3 a 132d Infantry litter party returning to the lines with patrol casualties was suddenly ambushed by an undetermined number of Japanese some three hundred yards west of Hill 500. In spite of the heavy and surprising enemy fire, the party was able to withdraw quickly to the patrol bivouac area from which it had started the return trip. Guides from the litter group led the main elements of the patrol back into the area, but no contact was made with the ambushing force. In the area, however, were the still-warm bodies of ten Japanese, plus several others killed in a previous action.

Small- and large-scale contacts were now fast becoming routine for all three regiments as the pressure was being increased on the enemy rear guard groups. The spotlight was gradually swinging to the 132d Infantry sector where patrols were scouring the jungles, trails

and high ground around Hills 500 and 501 and the Saua River. This was proving to be a gathering place for the retreating Japanese, and here more death blows were to be dealt the enemy.

On April 5 Companies I and K of the 132d drove into the Hill 500 sector and smashed against newly located Japanese positions. In a sharp, all-day action heralded by the pounding of mortars and artillery, sixty-five Japanese were slain.

Meanwhile, in the first significant pursuit action in the 182d Infantry sector a Bay State patrol attacked and pocketed an enemy force between Hill 280 and the upper reaches of the Saua River. Establishing a line to hold the Japanese in position, the 182d's aggressive patrol stood fast while Navy and Marine SBDs and TBFs bombed and strafed the area. On the same afternoon elements of the 1st Battalion, 164th Infantry, met and overcame strong enemy resistance on the west bank of the Torokina River's west fork.

To the south along the shores of Empress Augusta Bay on the same day, April 5, a brace of destroyers stood offshore and lobbed a host of 5-inch shells at enemy pillboxes some five hundred yards east of the mouth of the Torokina, just beyond the 132d Infantry bridgehead. On the following morning a lone destroyer returned to the scene to fire another three hundred rounds into the same group of emplacements. Air and ground observers reported that the coverage and effect of this heavy fire were excellent and that an impressive number of target hits were scored.

This destroyer bombardment of the Japanese pillboxes was the preliminary to a 132d Infantry attack designed to rid the entire area of the enemy. As the lone destroyer ceased fire and steamed away on the afternoon of April 6, a 155mm howitzer of the 221st Field Artillery and a 4.2-inch mortar of the 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion—the latter firing from Greater Magine Island—began a ceaseless peppering of the area to keep the Japanese on edge. Although little was now being accomplished in the way of further destruction, the harassing value of the continuous fire was not being underestimated.

Colonel Claude M. McQuarrie, in command of the 132d Infantry since March 21, planned his attack for April 7, designating the assaults to be made by Lt. Col. H. Wirt Butler's 2d Battalion. Moving out from the Company G bridgehead perimeter, Company E was to by-pass the enemy positions and was to set up a platoon block to the west beyond the positions. This move would thereby preclude the Japanese sending reinforcements into the pillboxes from Mavavia to the east, and would,

likewise, prevent or delay a Japanese withdrawal in the face of the attack.

With this platoon block firmly established, the remainder of Company E, reinforced by the regimental flamethrower platoon and the 2d Battalion's Pioneer Platoon, was to strike at the pillboxes from the east. The enemy would then have the choice of moving west toward the bridgehead, resisting in position, or attempting to drive through the company and the platoon block to the east.

By 0815 on the morning of April 7 the platoon block had been established on schedule and the remainder of the attacking force was moving into position from which the drive was to be launched. At 0900, from the area five hundred yards east of the bridgehead, the riflemen began a slow, deliberate movement westward toward the Company G lines. As they inched forward over the sandy soil they found that the entire area, efficiently covered the previous days by the destroyers' 5-inch guns, was nothing but a mass of bare, shattered palm trees and chewed-up undergrowth. The smashed vines and undergrowth which littered the ground made progress most difficult and offered the Japanese positions much more cover and concealment than they originally possessed.

Three hours later the lines of Company G came into view as the infantrymen moved on without contact. At 1230, however, as the main body of Company E moved to within eighty yards of the bridgehead perimeter, fire was suddenly received from a group of Japanese in pillboxes and communication trenches which lay between the jaws of the rapidly closing vise. By 1315 the attacking Illinois men had killed the last enemy defender and had made physical contact with Company G. During the day's activities twenty pillboxes had been destroyed, but only seven Japanese had been reported killed in the early afternoon fire fight.

Private Marlyn W. Caraway, of Loveland, Texas, seized the initiative personally during the course of the day's action and helped account for at least one of the twenty positions demolished. When the flamethrower squad in which he was a rifleman was pinned down by intense hostile fire Caraway deliberately exposed himself, dashed forward, firing his M1 into a particularly troublesome emplacement. By so doing the Texan drew the full volume of enemy fire upon himself. Taking advantage of the diversion caused by Caraway's bold and daring venture, the flamethrower squad attacked the pillbox and quickly destroyed it. The young rifleman survived his escapade unhurt.

Having completed its mission in four and a half hours, Company E

was ordered to return to its line of departure to set up positions to the rear of the platoon block. Company C was now attached to the 2d Battalion to fill the 500-yard hole between companies E and G, thus securing the area from enemy counterattack.

At 0800 on April 8 Company E initiated an eastward drive from the block in an attempt to extend Americal Division control of the shores of the bay as far toward Mavavia as possible. Noon found the advance elements of the company a thousand yards east of the new line of departure without having made contact with the enemy. In the early moments of the afternoon, however, the picture changed as quickly developing Japanese resistance forced the company to halt. A brief reconnaissance to the front indicated that the enemy opposition was being offered from well concealed positions constructed in depth at the fringe of the jungle along the left flank of the eastward-moving skirmish line. Rather than risk excessive loss of life overcoming these positions by manpower alone the commander of the 2d Battalion asked for tank support. By 1400 a platoon of tanks from the 754th Tank Battalion had reached the beach by LST and was being deployed for action.

After assault plans had been altered to allow for the use of the tanks, the drive against the pillboxes opened at 1600. A platoon from Company C was ordered into the area to make the attack in place of Company E.

As the new assault got under way the Japanese resistance seemed to melt before the powerful tank-infantry thrusts. Within ninety minutes all the pillboxes had been eliminated and the last of the die-hard defenders had been killed. The platoon dug in for the night while the tanks, vulnerable after darkness, were withdrawn to safer ground.

Late in the afternoon Company A, 25th Infantry, was attached to the 2d Battalion of the 132d and, on orders from the battalion commander, displaced to the beach to take up positions along a portion of the newly captured ground. Before nightfall Companies E and C of the 132d had completed a switch of positions which brought all of the latter unit into the forward area.

The eastward drive was resumed on the morning of April 9 as Company C pushed across a new line of departure at 0700. Because it was required that a detailed examination be made of each shattered, abandoned pillbox, the advance necessarily slowed down to a walk. By 1600, however, the company had reached its goal—the village of Mavavia—and reported that artillery bombardments and naval gunfire had completely destroyed the tiny native community.

This last advance climaxed the three-day attack by the 2d Battalion, 132d Infantry. During the drive Japanese resistance had alternately stiffened and broken as each new U.S. thrust was made. The final summary showed that sixty-two enemy pillboxes had been captured and destroyed and that more than forty Japanese were known to have been killed.

As the leading elements of the 132d's 2d Battalion (men of Company C, attached to the battalion) were moving into Mavavia, the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry, was completing the relief of all troops of the Illinois regiment east of the mouth of the Torokina River. Operating directly under the control of the commander of the 132d, these Negro troops, indoctrinated on Hill 260 following its recapture by units of the Americal, were charged with the protection of this narrow strip of beach. As these elements moved off Hill 260 to take up their new duties in the 132d's sector, their positions were taken over by the 93d Reconnaissance Troop and elements of the 25th Infantry.

Meanwhile, patrols from the 164th Infantry were continuing with their intensive scouring of the jungles in the Hill 600-250 sector, near the forks of the Torokina. Reconnaissance groups from the regiments were reporting new gun positions every day, each abandoned after having been damaged by U.S. shells and bombs. Combat patrols ranged up the west bank of the Torokina's west fork in an effort to cut the Japanese evacuation trail near the base of Mount Bagana, the nearby active volcano. Numerous small-scale brushes with the Japanese were reported during this time by North Dakota patrols and by elements of the 25th Infantry attached to the regiment.

The 182d Infantry, at this same time, was also carrying out a thorough search of the territory between the East-West trail and the east bank of the east fork of the Torokina, dispatching groups to points as far west as the Saua River. Many indications were found that the Japanese had very hurriedly retreated along the countless large and small trails in this heavily jungled sector.

Among the more important trails frequently mentioned in captured enemy orders and reports was the Kuma road, located some distance north of the East-West trail. Prior to the attacks on the perimeter, harassing and interdiction fires by the Americal's artillery had made travel and movement of supplies along the East-West trail difficult and costly, finally forcing the Japanese to resort to the use of the more circuitous Kuma road. General information indicated that the trail was well concealed by overhead cover and that it ran from the upper reaches of the Saua River westward and northward to the rear of the

high ground which formed Hills 600 and 1111. Efforts were now being made to locate this trail in the hope that some Japanese units might still be in bivouac along it or that blocks established along the route might result in the interception of enemy troops retreating from the Torokina area.

Early reconnaissance after securing Hill 260 succeeded in locating a well-beaten track near Pendleton Creek, but a series of patrols sent out along the trail made only scattered contacts with the enemy stragglers. The description of the trail did not fit that of the Kuma road and searches were begun anew.

Later another trail was located a short distance to the north and a comparison of the physical characteristics of the trail with its known description proved it to be the elusive Kuma road. Again, during reconnaissance along the trail only brief, insignificant contacts were reported, but much valuable information was found among the debris scattered through several large abandoned bivouac areas.

As the activities of the 132d Infantry were being drawn to a close on the shores of Empress Augusta Bay, troops from other units of the Illinois regiment were completing a more detailed reconnaissance of the Japanese strength and troop locations in the jungles around Hills 500 and 501. Other 132d infantry patrols pushed up the narrow aisles through the undergrowth toward Hills 165 and 155 in an endeavor to locate as many of the remaining enemy strongholds as possible.

Based on reports received from this area, General McClure, on April 8, instructed the 132d Infantry to secure the elongated hill mass formed by Hills 165, 155, 500 and 501, to clear the area of all organized Japanese resistance and to protect the area against enemy counterattacks while a strong outpost line of resistance was being established by the 1st Battalion, 25th Infantry. Attached to the 132d for the operation were, in addition to the Negro infantry battalion: the 3d Battalion, Fiji Infantry Regiment; Battery D, 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion; and Company C, 121st Medical Battalion. Direct artillery support, as in the past, was to be supplied by the 247th Field Artillery, with the 221st Field Artillery in general support.

While preparations were being made for the attack, the importance of this hill mass was pointed out quite emphatically on April 10 when long-silent enemy guns opened fire on the perimeter from positions in the midst of the 132d Infantry's objective area. The barrage, however, was too light to be of any great effect, and accurate Americal Division counterbattery fire soon forced the guns to cease fire for the time being.

The Japanese continued to fire intermittently until the afternoon of April 13 when the 4th Medium Artillery Regiment, the principal enemy unit subsequently identified as having been in position in the area, let loose its final round.

On April 11 elements of Headquarters Company, 132d Infantry, plus units of Company H, relieved troops of the 21st Reconnaissance Troop on the Magine Islands. Three days later the garrison on the tiny coral islands was strengthened by the arrival of the 132d's Cannon Company, with its four 75mm field howitzers. This move enabled Cannon Company to support activities of the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry, on the shores of the bay near Mavavia and the mouth of the Mavavia River.

In preparation for the attacks on the remaining Japanese in the regimental objective area, the 132d Infantry set up a forward command post on the west bank of the Torokina River, near Hill 260. The regiment's Antitank Company was deployed around the command post for local protection while a medical collecting station and ration and ammunition dumps were being established within the command post perimeter. By this time the 57th Engineers had begun work on a road and a bridge across the Torokina a short distance north of Hill 260.

Committed to the coming attack was the Illinois regiment's 3d Battalion, still commanded by Lt. Col. Louis L. Franco. Considering the difficulties involved in supplying the force once the attacks were under way, the battalion commander ordered each man to carry rations and ammunition sufficient for five days of action. Additional supplies were to be sent forward from the regimental command post by carrying parties as soon as possible.

The 3d Battalion, Fiji Infantry Regiment, made the first move in the operation as it headed out the East-West trail to Hill 65. The mission of the battalion was to protect the left rear of the 132d's 3d Battalion as the attacks were being pressed. By nightfall the jungle-wise Fijians had reached a point 1,500 yards east of Hill 65, where they halted to organize a perimeter for the night.

On the following morning two companies from the Fiji battalion were sent forward to the wagon trail leading up to Hill 65 with the intention of establishing a trail block there. During the day on April 14 many sharp, small-scale contacts were reported around the Fiji command post as security patrols stalked the narrow trails. One patrol, late in the day, was ambushed by the Japanese on the way back to the command post. A short while later an entire company from the battalion



Maj. Gen. (later Lt. Gen.) Alexander M. Patch, Commanding General, May 27 to December 31, 1942



AT THE RIGHT READING FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Maj. Gen. (later Lt. Gen.) John R. Hodge, Commanding General, May 28, 1943, to March 31, 1944. Maj. Gen. Robert B. McClure, Commanding General, April 1 to November 3, 1944. Maj. Gen. William H. Arnold, Commanding General, November 4, 1944 to December 12, 1945

Brig. Gen. (later Maj. Gen.) Edmund B. Sebree, Commanding General, January 1 to May 28, 1943





Troops of Task Force 6814 move up a ship's gangplank at the New York Port of Embarkation prior to departure for Australia and New Caledonia



Troops of the 182d Infantry reach Le Grand Quai in a French lighter. Note the Tri-color and the Free French flag on the launch in the background.

Men of the 1st Battalion, 180th Field Artillery, march past the Grand Hotel du Pacifique, in Noumea, en route to initial bivouacs on New Caledonia



Vehicles of Americal's Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron on a New Caledonia mountain trail during training

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



Admiral Ghormley, General Harmon, and General Patch inspect troops of the 164th Infantry loaded on a transport at Noumea ready for the trip to Guadalcanal

Five enemy tanks destroyed in the October battle at the Matanikau River lie useless and idle on the sand spit at the river's mouth. *(Marine Corps photo)*





Two beached Japanese transports burn on Guadalcanal's north coast following the bitter air and naval battle of Guadalcanal. (*U. S. Navy photo*)



Sunlight rarely penetrated through the dense growth to the surface of this road, one of Guadalcanal's very best "highways." (*Marine Corps photo*)



An average Guadalcanal "highway." The road leading inland from the mouth of the Matanikau River along its eastern bank.



Troops of the 132d Infantry move up toward Mount Austen through dense jungle during critical moments of the battle for that mountain

Elements of the 164th Infantry march along Engineer-built Major Fissell Highway on Bougainville, en route to forward positions to relieve units of the 3d Marine Division



Riflemen of Company C, 132d Infantry, advance cautiously through low undergrowth as they clear out stubborn enemy positions near the mouth of the Torokina River

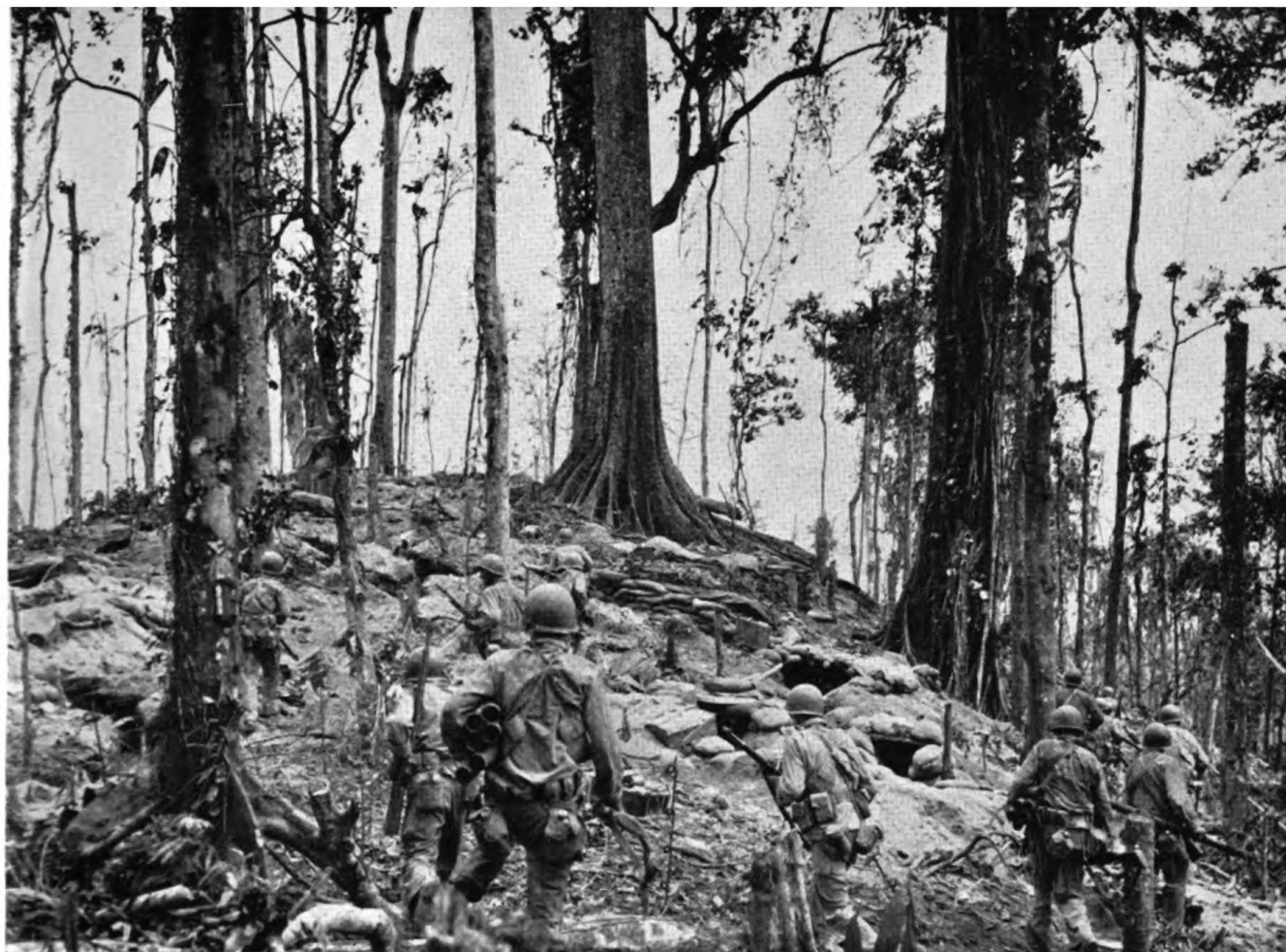




Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson presents the Medal of Honor to Staff Sgt. Jessie R. Drowley for President Franklin D. Roosevelt

Because of prompt treatment by the Americal's medics, one of the Illinois regiment's casualties in the Torokina River battle manages to smile despite his painful arm wounds





Americal Division infantrymen inch their way carefully up the west slope of Hill 260's south knob during the bitter battle to recapture the hill from the Japanese

All that remained of Hill 260's once heavily jungled south knob after its recapture from the Japanese was this barren, battle-scarred hill





Veteran crewmen of a 4.2-inch mortar of the 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion cover up against the ear-splitting crack of their weapon during Americal Division operations in the Laruma River area



A 132d Infantry BAR-man covers a Japanese pillbox after a flame-thrower operator had set it afire during extension of the Americal Division's hold along the shores of Empress Augusta Bay

During Americal Division operations along the Numa-Numa Trail this 75mm cannon was towed by hand to the crest of a hill to support infantry assaults and patrols



An Americal Division patrol moves slowly and cautiously through an abandoned village during mopping-up operations in northwestern Leyte





A support wave of Americal Division infantrymen coming ashore at Talisay, Cebu, files past a damaged LVT and moves inland to press the attack forward

Initial Americal Division assault waves move across the heavily mined beach at Talisay, to begin the ground combat phase of the Victor II operation.



Riflemen of the 132d Infantry wait patiently in hip-deep water as lead scouts check Olango Island, off Cebu City, during the early days of the Cebu campaign. The mountains of Cebu in the background.



An M7 self-propelled gun from Cannon Company, 132d Infantry, rolls into the outskirts of Cebu City to begin the actual liberation of the island's capital





Smoke-shrouded shirtless cannoneers of Battery C, 245th Field Artillery Battalion, serve their 105mm howitzers during a fire mission in support of elements of the 164th Infantry in southern Negros

A scout of the 2d Battalion, 164th Infantry, covers comrades who are filling canteens in the Ocoy River, Negros Oriental, shortly before the group engaged the Japanese in a bitter fire fight

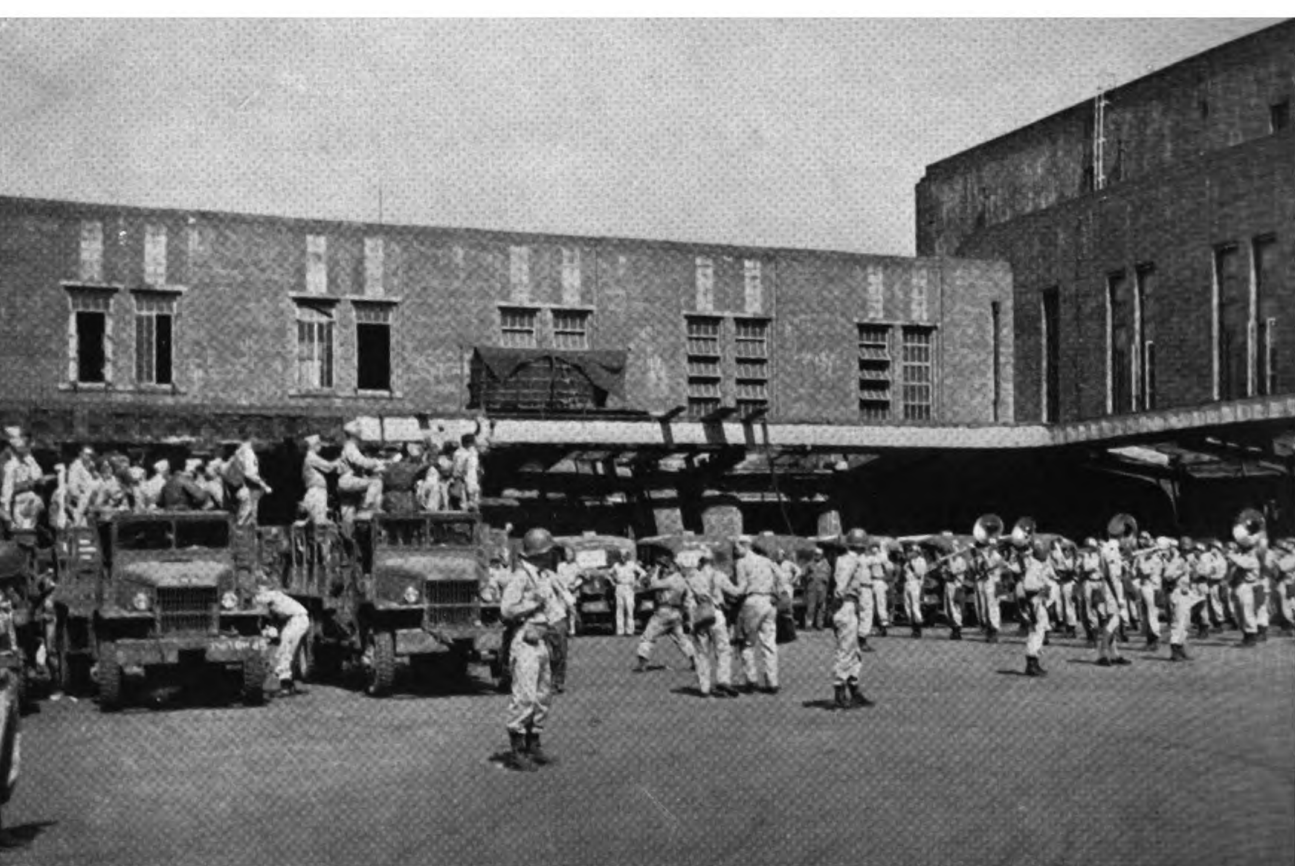




Representatives of Lt. Gen. Sadashi Kataoka, commander of the Japanese 35th Army, meet Americal Division officers near Sacsac, Cebu, to arrange for the surrender of forces under General Kataoka's command

Lt. Gen. Kataoka (*right*), commander of the surrendered Japanese 35th Army, sits dejectedly in an Air Force transport awaiting his trip to Luzon for internment as a prisoner of war





The Americal Division Band serenades liberated American and Allied prisoners of war on their arrival at the Yokohama railroad station en route to ships and planes that will take them home

Two Americal Division officers check the condition and the inventory of stores of enemy arms near Yokohama



attacked the ambush, now definitely located three hundred yards west of Hill 280. Preceded by the heavy fire of a dozen Bren guns, the Fijians moved forward with fixed bayonets and killed twenty-seven Japanese before dark.

By 1800 on April 14 the 3d Battalion, 132d Infantry, with elements of the attached troops, reached an assembly area seven hundred yards west of Hill 65. From this point the attack against the hill mass extending to the south was to jump off. Strong security patrols were dispatched to the front without delay in an effort to be forewarned of Japanese movements in the area.

One small patrol from the 132d's Company L encountered and killed five enemy who had been guarding an ammunition dump four hundred yards northwest of the assembly area and quickly set about the task of securing the large amount of small-arms ammunition and hand grenades stored in the area.

As dawn seeped down into the floor of the jungles on the morning of April 15 the attack against the enemy-held hill mass began in earnest as the battalion moved generally south toward its first intermediate objective, Hill 165. The general area into which the battalion was now moving had been subjected to a heavy concentration of artillery preparation fires and an intense air strike, with good effect reported on the target area.

From the air the area around the group of objectives looked deceptively flat, but the riflemen found it to be covered with an endless series of small, steep ravines which make progress most difficult. Bougainville's daily rains did little to add to the ease of movement, for the tall trees, thickly covered with branches and vines to a height of more than a hundred feet let few of the drying rays of the tropical sun through the forests to the muddy ground.

During the early afternoon, after a morning without contact with the enemy, forward elements of the 3d Battalion reached the base of Hill 165. By mid-afternoon, after moving carefully up the shell-stripped slopes of the hill, the first objective was reported secured and quickly turned over to Company A, 25th Infantry. While the Negro riflemen were organizing the defenses on the hill, security patrols from the 3d Battalion moved around the hill in search of signs of Japanese movement.

At dawn on April 16 the attacking forces again headed south, this time toward Hill 155, the next objective. A strong combat patrol led the way over ground it had covered several days before. The remainder

of the 3d Battalion followed in the center, with the bulk of the 25th Infantry's 1st Battalion bringing up the rear. In short order Hill 155 was taken without incident and elements of the 25th Infantry were left behind to organize a perimeter.

By mid-morning the forward elements of the 3d Battalion had run into strong opposition at the north base of Hill 500. Pulling back a short distance for safety, the battalion waited while the 247th Field Artillery poured a preparatory concentration on the enemy positions and on the crest of the hill. Striking swiftly on the heels of the bombardment, the full force of the battalion rolled the Japanese back in confusion and by 1200 the crest of Hill 500 had been taken.

Once on the top of the hill, Company L reported seeing indications of enemy preparations for a counterattack from the southeast. Company I was quickly instructed to organize defenses against such an attack, in conjunction with those already being prepared by Company L. Later in the afternoon the Japanese counterthrust came not many moments after the hasty preparations had been completed. For a short while a furious fusillade of fire split the jungle silence. Before long, however, the attack was beaten back, with both Companies L and I gaining precious time to strengthen their positions and organize for further defensive action.

Enemy movements continued in the area throughout the afternoon of April 16, adding to the tenseness of the situation. There was no definite means of determining the exact enemy strength, and it might well have been that the reinforced battalion had walked into a gigantic Japanese trap designed for revenge for the defeat on Hill 260.

Shortly after Companies I and L thwarted the Japanese attempt to retake Hill 500 another column of enemy was observed moving along a trail just east of the hill, seemingly moving in the direction of Hill 65. This force, it was thought, might be moving against the north flank of the 3d Battalion in an attempt to sever the route of supply and evacuation. Quickly, the battalion commander ordered Company C of the 25th Infantry and elements of the 3d Battalion's Headquarters Company to take up positions to the left of Company I. As the last man settled into position to await what seemed inevitable, the lead enemy scouts came into view.

For half an hour fire and counterfire continued as the Illinois infantrymen stood fast in position. When the fight dwindled down to an intermittent peppering with U.S. rifles and machine guns, the enemy force was seen scrambling in disorder into the underbrush after having

suffered heavy casualties. The safety of Hill 500 was now almost completely assured. It was never determined, however, whether the enemy column actually intended flanking the 3d Battalion's positions or whether it was actually en route to Hill 65, but it is certain that it did neither on this particular afternoon.

Meanwhile, enemy activity was on the increase in the low ground southwest of Hill 500. Company K, the battalion reserve company, was ordered to organize a line to the right of Company L, extending along toward the deep and almost impenetrable swamp west of the hill. While the line was being organized, a group of enemy pillboxes was discovered in the low ground south of Hill 500, from which area some of the attacking Japanese must have come.

Without delay these positions were subjected to a storm of fire from all available weapons as a softening-up program was undertaken. The Japanese occupying the emplacements answered with intense bursts of machine-gun and knee-mortar fire.

Reconnaissance patrols felt their way cautiously into the strongly held area, searching for weak spots in the line. Reports received from the patrols indicated that the enemy held a long series of strong positions to the southwest and west of Hill 500, but the patrols were unable to definitely locate the left (north) flank of this line. Here a stalemate might be in the process of development.

After dusk the exchange of fire between the Illinois infantrymen and the Japanese continued intermittently, with but few brief pauses during the night. On the morning of April 17 the enemy fire increased in intensity as Company I, to the right of the enemy positions, undertook a slow advance southward. By early afternoon the company had destroyed two pillboxes and had taken three machine guns in a movement around the enemy's right flank.

In spite of the fact that a slight advantage had now been gained, no further attacks were made during the day. The men were exhausted by the oppressive heat of the island. Further, supplies of food, water and ammunition, all hand-carried, were too low to risk further action. Carrying parties, however, succeeded in reaching these advance positions of the 3d Battalion on the afternoon of April 17 and with supplies replenished plans were made for new assaults on the following morning.

An all-night harassing of the firmly entrenched Japanese by the 247th Field Artillery turned into a thundering preparatory concentration on the morning of April 18 as mortars of the 132d Infantry and the 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion joined in on the booming chorus. As the

heavy fire died down the attacking troops of the 132d's 3d Battalion moved out warily toward the pillboxes, bent upon taking all of them as quickly as possible.

The plan of the day's attack had been outlined on the previous evening by the battalion commander. Company L had been designated as the holding force and, as the attack got under way, began moving to assigned positions opposite the center of the Japanese line by the Fort Benning method of fire-and-movement. Company K, followed by Company I, set out to envelop the left flank of the Japanese line.

Before the forward elements of Company K had moved more than two hundred yards, reports received from Company L indicated that all was quiet to its front. The flanking force was now ordered to halt and remain in position while the lack of enemy counterfire was being investigated by the holding force. A brief but thorough search to the front revealed that the Japanese had abandoned the positions and had either withdrawn to better positions on or near Hill 501 to the south or had fled across the Saua River to the east under cover of darkness.

Quick to take advantage of the ground to be gained almost without effort and certainly without casualties, the battalion commander issued orders for Company L to push aggressively south toward Hill 501, the last objective, while the flanking forces, returning to Hill 500, were reorganizing before following. ~~Company B~~ of the 25th Infantry was ordered into the area to hold Hill 500 while the assault echelons moved on to complete the assigned mission.

By mid-afternoon of April 18, Companies I and L, joining forces in the southward movement, were on the crest of Hill 501 after having made no further contact with the Japanese. Company C of the 25th Infantry then followed to take over garrisoning of the hill while its southern slopes were being screened by the 132d's 3d Battalion. The mission assigned the 132d Infantry ten days before was now complete.

Meanwhile, the Fijians, protecting the left rear of the 132d Infantry's 3d Battalion from patrol bases to the north, were having a private war of their own with the Japanese. During the first days of the minor campaign patrols operating out of the block on the wagon trail near Hill 65 were meeting and annihilating small groups of enemy with a somewhat amazing consistency. On April 17 the entire 3d Battalion of the Fiji Infantry Regiment was ordered to occupy and hold the ground between Hills 65 and 165 to complete the securing of the area.

Once a carrying party reached the battalion base camp with additional supplies, the first elements of the battalion began moving out

from the unit's perimeter in the direction of the wagon-trail block. Two platoons cleared the area without delay and the remainder of the battalion prepared to follow.

Suddenly, without warning, into the confusion connected with the movement the Japanese thrust an attack by an estimated reinforced platoon employing five machine guns and numerous other weapons, an attack which broke furiously on the Fijians from the front and both flanks. In spite of the difficulties imposed upon the Fijians by the unexpected attack, the men quickly jumped back into foxholes and slugged it out with the enemy. The two platoons sent ahead were unable to rejoin the battalion, but the strength on hand was sufficient to cope with the situation.

In the furious assault the Japanese were able to force a rapid penetration of the Fijian perimeter, but a quickly organized counter-attack beat back this small salient. After thirty minutes of the most bitter fighting, the Japanese withdrew, leaving behind a half-dozen dead. The cost to the Fijians had been slight—five men wounded, and only one of these in serious condition.

Following the capture of Hill 501 on April 18, attention was turned to the task of locating and destroying other remaining pockets of organized resistance in the immediate area. The 132d Infantry's Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon pushed across the Saua River to scout the ground around Hill 150. Shortly, a group of Japanese positions was discovered near the southwest slopes of the hill.

Based on the information obtained by this patrol, plans were made for an attack on April 25 by the 1st Battalion, Fiji Infantry Regiment, operating under 132d Infantry control. Several days were required to move the battalion into the area and prepare for the new drive.

On the morning of April 25 one platoon from the 3d Battalion, 132d Infantry, moved into position just west of the enemy emplacements with the intention of delivering strong bursts of fire on the Japanese once a company of the Fijian battalion had reached its assigned line of departure. In the meantime, the Fijians crossed the Saua River two thousand yards north of Hill 150 and turned south toward the objective. Moving rapidly up the north slopes of the hill the dark-skinned riflemen surprised what was later discovered to be an enemy artillery command post and gained control of the crest of Hill 150. In the short, sharp fight seven Japanese were slain without cost to the Fijians.

Continuing on down the south slopes of the hill, one Fiji platoon moved to the line of departure from which the attack on the series of

pillboxes was to be launched. When the platoon was reported to be in position, the 132d's I&R Platoon opened fire on the line from the west.

In loosing all available fire on the Japanese positions, however, the Illinois infantrymen must have shaken the afternoon rain clouds a little too hard. As the first bursts of machine-gun fire broke the eerie silence of the jungle, the heaviest rain yet seen on Bougainville thundered down over the entire area.

The slopes of Hill 150, battered by artillery fire, quickly became a sea of mud. In this slimy mire the Fijians attacked, but soon the drive stalled as the mud underfoot cut down movement and the sheets of driving rain limited visibility to a few feet. It now became improbable that the attack could be resumed before dark and, therefore, contacts with the enemy were ordered broken to allow the troops to struggle back through the slippery muck to the bivouac areas.

On the following morning the crest of Hill 150 was again reached, this time completely without incident, and plans were made for a new attack on the Japanese positions south of the hill. Reconnaissance prior to the attack, however, now revealed that the Japanese had abandoned the positions during the night and had cleared out of the area.

While these actions were being brought to a climax, elements of the 1st Battalion, 132d Infantry, were moving into the Hills 500-501 sector to establish base camps from which a detailed reconnaissance would be made southeast of Hill 150. The Americal Division's Photo Intelligence Section had reported the probable existence of a corduroy road running generally south to the beach from a point some 2,500 yards southeast of Hill 150. The mission of these elements of the 1st Battalion was to locate the road and to sweep its entire length clear of the Japanese.

At 0700 on the morning of April 22 Company A, reinforced by a machine-gun section of Company D, and by one platoon of Fiji riflemen, headed eastward to the Saua River from Hill 155 and crossed the river five hundred yards south of Hill 150. The group now headed overland in a southeasterly direction for a distance of two thousand yards, at which point the advance elements came directly upon the very end of the corduroy road. The photo-intelligence information had certainly been correct. Even the description of the road accurately matched that drawn up by a man who had never been on this spot. Here a perimeter was set up for the night as preparations were made for the southward sweep to the bay.

Shortly after dawn on April 23, the reinforced company broke camp and headed south along the road, moving cautiously along its west side.

During the morning several stray Japanese were encountered and killed, but no organized resistance was met. In the afternoon, after successfully pushing to within 150 yards of the beach, the lead scouts ran into an unestimated number of Japanese and quickly precipitated a heavy fire fight.

Driving vigorously forward against the combined power of the emplaced Japanese rifles, machine guns and mortars, Company A and its attached units were ultimately able to break through the enemy positions and push on to the beach. Executing an abrupt about-face, the troops turned their backs to Empress Augusta Bay and formed a perimeter around the small, reversely established beachhead from which they were to be evacuated by landing craft under cover of darkness. The next morning found the force safely inside the Americal Division's lines where it was reported that an estimated fifty Japanese had been killed in the previous afternoon's struggle.

By this time the mission of the 132d's 3d Battalion in the sector around Hills 500 and 501 had been completed, although the operations around Hill 150 were still in the planning state. At 1622 on April 24 the command post of the 3d Battalion on Hill 500 was officially closed and shortly thereafter the forward command post of the regiment, located near the Torokina, was shut down. In the operations against the Japanese in the sector just west of the Saua River more than two hundred Japanese had met their deaths at the hands of the Illinois riflemen and the attached troops.

While the 132d's 3d Battalion was completing its assigned mission, the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry, went into action along the shores of the bay east of Mavavia. On April 19 a patrol in platoon strength moved across the mouth of the Mavavia River and was promptly pinned down by intense Japanese rifle and machine-gun fire. In spite of the gravity of the situation, the platoon was finally able to extricate itself and pull back to safer ground across the river mouth. Following this, artillery and mortar fire was adjusted on the area and an almost continuous barrage was begun.

On April 24, after nearly five full days of incessant pounding, the barrage was lifted. Quickly, one company of the 24th Infantry and a platoon of tanks from the 754th Tank Battalion landed from LCTs beached east of the Mavavia River and initiated an eastward drive along the narrow strip of sand at the edge of the jungle. Moderate to heavy resistance quickly developed as the Negro infantrymen and the supporting tanks pushed forward. By nightfall more than a thousand yards of

beach had been cleared before orders were given to halt for the night.

The advance continued on the following morning in much the same manner and by mid-afternoon another thousand yards of beach had been wrested from hostile control. Swampy ground near the mouth of the Moy River now halted further attempts to gain ground.

Following the projection of the Americal Division salient along the bay by this company of the 24th Infantry, the 2d Battalion, 132d Infantry, took over beach positions between the mouth of the Torokina River and the Mavavia River lagoon. The remaining elements of the 24th Infantry's 1st Battalion now extended their positions eastward toward the limit of the company advance. This move brought more than 5,500 yards of the shore line under the control of the Americal Division and its attached units.

Although the Division spotlight had been turned on the 132d Infantry for the greater part of the month of April, the Americal's other two regiments had not been idle. The 164th Infantry had been completing reconnaissance of Hills 600, 1111 and 1000 and had extended regimental control well into the area around the base of Mount Bagana, the complacently puffing and often rumbling volcano which rose high above the entire combat area. The 182d Infantry, in like manner, scoured the undergrowth and the narrow, winding trails between the east fork of the Torokina and the East-West trail. Many hitherto unsuspected bivouac areas were located and checked, but all were found to be abandoned. Hills 65 and 280 fell to the Bay Staters after only scattered contacts throughout the regimental zone of action.

As April drew to a close contacts for all regiments were becoming fewer in this broad area as the Japanese were withdrawing further to the southeast to lick their wounds.

Nor had the artillery units of the Americal been inactive during the month. Forward observers and artillery parties went along with large and small reconnaissance groups, eager to adjust on-the-spot concentrations of artillery fire in support of the patrols' combat actions. Lacking contacts and targets of opportunity, the observers could only hike and hike some more along the close, twisting, up-and-down trails, voicing few complaints.

After the 132d Infantry garrison had abandoned its station on the Magine Islands on April 26, preparations were made for a "re-invasion" on the following morning by one firing battery from the 245th Field Artillery. On the morning of April 27 landing craft bearing the battalion's Battery C circled off the islands, ready to begin landing the quartet of

105mm howitzers. By 1600, after battling tricky tidal currents and hidden coral reefs for the greater part of the day, the battery was ashore, but the trucks and howitzers were bogging down in the soft sands along the beach. It was not until darkness had set in that the battery commander was able to report Greater Magine again "secured." The howitzers were now in position to fire in support of long-range patrol activities to the southeast along the shores of Bougainville.

On April 26 one battery from the 247th Field Artillery and one from the 221st displaced to positions on the west bank of the Torokina River, near its mouth. Upon completion of registrations, the two batteries were ready to offer artillery support as far to the east and southeast as the mouth of the Reini River. The subsequent movement of the single battery from the 245th to the Magines now brought artillery support power up to the equivalent of one battalion able to cover the Reini's mouth.

Combat and reconnaissance activities during the month of April now resulted in the establishment of the strong outpost line of resistance planned by General Hodge after the abortive Japanese attacks in March. The high ground north and northeast of the perimeter, that formed by Hills 250, 600, 1111 and 1000, was now in the hands of the 164th Infantry. From Hill 250, on the west bank of the Torokina, the outpost line ran generally southeastward to Hill 65, some four thousand yards away, at which point it turned generally southward toward the sea. This sector was now under the control of the 182d Infantry. Passing through the series of hills captured by the 132d Infantry, the line was extended south to a small native garden just below Hill 500. The gap between this point and the sea was to be covered by patrols.

Occupying the main portion of the Americal's outpost line was the 25th Infantry, which spread its 2d, 3d and 1st Battalions, in that order, along the line from a point east of the Torokina in the north around to the native garden in the south. Supporting this Negro regiment in patrol actions was the 593d Field Artillery which, on April 20, had displaced forward from its original positions to a new battalion area on the banks of the Torokina not far from Hill 260. By April 30 the assistant division commander of the 93d Infantry Division, General Boyd, had formed all units of the 93d Division on Bougainville into the 93d Provisional Infantry Brigade to take command of the outpost line beyond the Torokina.

Attention was turned to the 164th Infantry on May 1 as this regiment took over patrol operations around the headwaters of the

Reini and Tekessi Rivers, more than eight thousands yards east of Divisional (Conical) Hill, the most outstanding terrain feature southeast of the volcano. With little delay long-range reconnaissance and combat patrols began to push on into the forbidding area.

In order to relieve the 164th of some of the routine patrol responsibility in its own relatively quiet regimental sector, the 182d Infantry took over reconnaissance activities in the upper Torokina area on May 4. Eleven days later, however, when the Bay Staters pronounced this area entirely free of the enemy, the 164th assumed control once again.

It was not until June 5 that the first strong contacts were made with the enemy by elements of the 164th Infantry in the Reini-Tekessi area. On this particular day, Company I, moving eastward through the sector, was halted by a series of strong enemy positions near the crest of a high ridge line some six thousand yards north of Mom Hill. After scouting the positions, the company attacked later in the day, but the terrain and the natural concealment of the emplacements proved to be of advantage to the Japanese. By nightfall Company I had withdrawn to safer ground.

Reinforced by troops from Company F, Company I made a new attempt to crack the enemy resistance, but again, during the entire morning and afternoon of June 6, the Japanese held their ground. The volume of fire poured on the enemy in the two unsuccessful assaults probably accounted for many casualties, but lack of visibility made it difficult to determine the extent of the damage inflicted.

While the 164th Infantry's operations in the Reini-Tekessi area were in their first stages, the 182d Infantry was dispatching numerous strong patrols into the Hill 350 area, far across the Saua River southeast of Hill 150. In a three-day period, making scattered strong contacts, the Massachusetts men ran up an impressive score of 150 Japanese killed. Some reports were received from patrols that sounds of vehicle traffic had been heard in the area, but no confirmation of these reports was made.

Toward the end of May the 21st Reconnaissance Troop, under Lt. Howard N. Steff, was assigned the job of scouting the area around the mouth of the Tekessi River. Supported from the bay by LCI gunboats, the troop, with several machine-gun-bearing half-tracks, and with Battery C, 247th Field Artillery along for direct support, landed at the Tekessi's mouth on May 25. Mounted patrols rumbled along the beach while patrols on foot moved in through the dense virgin jungles a short distance inland. On May 27 after only a few minor contacts had been made, the force was withdrawn and ordered back to the perimeter.

On May 30 Battery A, 247th Field Artillery, moved by LCT to the vicinity of the mouth of the Tekessi to support long-range combat patrol activities of the 3d Battalion, Fiji Infantry Regiment, far to the southeast along the shores of the bay. Five days later, after the Fijians had moved well beyond the range of the 105mm howitzers, the battery displaced further to the southeast in a shore-to-shore movement. Again on June 6 the battery jumped to a point near the village of Marawaka, three and one-half miles east of Motupena Point, at the northern limits of Gazelle Harbor. On this same afternoon, however, the Fijians and the 247th's battery were hastily evacuated from Marawaka when a strong and powerful Japanese force, stirred up by the Fijians, launched a heavy attack.

Meanwhile, operations of the 164th Infantry continued in the intensely humid jungles near the headwaters of the Reini River. Direct artillery support, on June 12, fell to Battery B, 247th Field Artillery, as it moved into advanced positions in the vicinity of Hill 65.

Following the capture of the high ground just west of the Saua River by the 132d Infantry in April, the Americal's industrious 57th Engineers blasted, bulldozed and scraped a broad highway to Hill 65 and to Hills 500 and 501, enabling troops and supplies to be transported to the outpost line without difficulty.

On June 18 Battery C, 221st Field Artillery, relieved the 247th's Battery B in direct support of the 164th Infantry's 3d Battalion. The battery was now equipped with the new 155mm M1 howitzer, supplanting the old box trail M1917 which had stood the rugged tests of World War I and the grim days of World War II's first Pacific offensive on Guadalcanal. The split trails of the new howitzers permitted high-angle fire and, in addition, the weapons outranged the old M1917s by several thousand yards.

In an effort to clean out the headwaters of the Reini, the entire 3d Battalion of the 164th Infantry was sent into action in mid-June. By June 20 the battalion had crossed the Saua River and had moved into the high ground far north of Mom Hill. By 1500 on the afternoon of June 20 leading elements of the force had engaged in a series of sharp engagements and had killed an undetermined number of Japanese. Three minor enemy defensive areas were quickly cleaned out as battalion patrols searched for others in the sector. By the evening of June 21, when no further contacts were reported, the 3d Battalion was ordered withdrawn back across the Saua River. Small patrols were left in the area to carry out additional reconnaissance missions as yet uncompleted.

Control of the outpost line, meanwhile, had passed from the 25th Infantry to the 132d on June 12. This marked the last appearance of these now seasoned Negro infantrymen in action on Bougainville. The 93d Reconnaissance Troop, however, was slated for further combat action under the direct control of the commander of the Americal.

On June 28 the 182d Infantry assumed control of the Reini-Tekessi area, relieving patrols from the 164th. Reconnaissance through the area resulted in the location of two strong enemy defensive posts, and plans were made to attack both on July 7. The Japanese, however, knowing that the appearance of the scouts from U.S. forces usually preceded a strong attack, fled into the dense jungle before the attack could be launched.

Several weeks before, on May 13, in accordance with orders from higher headquarters, Brig. Gen. William C. Dunckel, commander of the Americal's artillery, very reluctantly turned over his troops to his successor, Brig. Gen. LeCount H. Slocum. Thirty officers and men from each battery in Division Artillery honored General Dunckel with a surprise parade, after which the departing commander said:

"In future campaigns, when you fellows are pulling the lanyards against the Jap, remember now and then to say that this one is for old Bill Dunckel. Will you?"

After July 7 in the 182d Infantry sector around the upper reaches of the Reini River only a few brief, scattered contacts were recorded as the Japanese faded from sight. Not a single report of enemy activity came to the 182d's command post after August 15. In spite of the apparent futility of their constant wanderings, the Bay State riflemen covered every known trail and track time and again and even succeeded in finding a route to virtually inaccessible Mom Hill.

In order now to complete the establishment of a firm outpost line, General McClure ordered a battalion of the 132d Infantry into the Jaba River area in early August. On August 10 the 1st Battalion of the 132d moved by LCT and LCM to the mouth of the Jaba to begin operations. The mission of the battalion and its attached units was to set up a strong trail block in the area and to destroy all enemy found in the immediate vicinity. Attached to the battalion were the 132d's Regimental I & R Platoon, Battery C of the 247th Field Artillery, one scout dog and its handlers from the 25th Quartermaster War Dog Platoon and a detachment of New Guinea police boys. At the time of the landing, the battery

from the 247th Field Artillery was put ashore near the mouth of the Tekessi River, some eight thousand yards north of the trail block area.

The infantrymen found the Jaba River area quite typical of the coastal region around Empress Augusta Bay. The beach was only 150 yards wide at its widest point, and what little dry, high ground there was to be found exhibited a thick mantle of undergrowth. Only one small trail traversed the south bank of the Jaba River, heading inland toward high and more solid ground beyond a broad, jungled swamp. This was the area in which the battalion was required to operate, an area which the Japanese themselves might have thought forbidding.

On the day following the landing Company C, moving inland a distance of about four hundred yards, ran into and overcame resistance from a squad of Japanese manning a trail block. Two days later, farther into the interior, the company eliminated still another block and captured some hurriedly abandoned equipment. After searching the entire area and establishing the trail block called for in General McClure's instructions, the 1st Battalion was relieved on August 19 by Company G of the 132d.

Artillery support, on August 23, passed from Battery C, 247th Field Artillery, to the 132d Infantry's Cannon Company, the latter unit now armed with the new 105mm self-propelled howitzers. In addition, Company H of the 132d also moved into the area to add the fire power of its heavy machine guns and mortars.

At dawn on August 27, after scattered skirmishes had been reported and after brief flurries of enemy mortar in the previous days, heavy enemy mortar and automatic-weapons fire was received on both flanks and in front of the trail block. However, before the Japanese could launch the assault which was certain to follow, concentrations of mortar and howitzer fire dispersed the enemy force.

After the enemy attempt to eliminate the Illinois trail block had been foiled at the Jaba River units in the area were shifted. Company E of the 132d and the Cannon Company were left at the mouth of the Tekessi River while one reinforced platoon from the 2d Battalion was ordered to hold the Jaba River block. Units on the block were relieved in turn from late August until October 12 when Company K, 164th Infantry, appeared on the scene to take over operations. Control of the entire sector in which but few contacts were being made was now turned over to the North Dakota regiment.

The 164th maintained control of the trail block until November 5 when Company L of the 132d moved into the area, signalling the resump-

tion of control by the Illinois men. The only incident of importance during the 164th's tour in the area took place on October 20 when a prisoner of war was captured and sent back to the perimeter for questioning.

The 132d Infantry remained in charge of the sector for only a short while in November, for on November 10 elements of the Australian 3d Division came ashore at the trail block finally to relieve the Americal Division of this responsibility.

In the meantime, on September 12, the North Dakotans moved back into the Reini-Tekessi area, relieving the 182d Infantry with strong patrols which pushed aggressively eastward along the high ground north and east of Mom Hill. The natural defensive area soon produced a number of strong contacts with the Japanese. On September 28 a patrol from Company E attacked an estimated forty enemy in a small village and killed eighteen without suffering a single casualty. Trail blocks set up throughout the area were maintained without incident, but during October two prisoners of war were taken.

On November 14 the 164th's Regimental I&R Platoon departed for an intensive search of a series of hills which lay some ten thousand yards east of Mom Hill. On the following day a group of about fifteen Japanese was observed in an unidentified native village in the area. Visual contact was maintained with the Japanese while the village was scouted from all sides.

The small patrol was reinforced by the arrival of men from Company H on November 16 and plans were made for an attack on the unsuspecting enemy. Confident that his attack would go well, the patrol leader brazenly held a "dry run," following which an exacting critique was held.

In the pre-dawn darkness of the following day, the troops stole quietly into assigned positions, completely surrounding the village. On a pre-arranged signal all men opened fire and for a few brief seconds the roar of guns was deafening. Then, as suddenly as the fusillade began, it stopped. Not a single shot was fired in return by the Japanese for none of the twenty-three found dead in the village lived long enough to raise their weapons. In the annals of the Bougainville campaign, this act stands as one of the most efficient small-unit actions undertaken by any troops of the Americal.

By the evening of November 10, in accordance with instructions from XIV Corps headquarters, troops of the Australian 3d Division had completed the relief of all units of the Americal Division in position and on patrol east of the Torokina River. The relieved units packed their

gear and moved back over the roads built by the 57th Engineers, into the perimeter for rest and reorganization.

During all this period, however, units of the Americal had been active in another section of the island, but these units, too, were returning to the perimeter as the Division gathered its forces together as a unit for the first time in many weeks.

The Trail to Numa-Numa

WHILE THE AMERICAL DIVISION WAS ESTABLISHING ITS OUTPOST line beyond the Torokina River, new actions were developing to the north of the perimeter, over in the sector of the 37th Division. Shortly after the last Japanese attack on the lines of the 37th's 129th Infantry, plans were drawn up for a pursuit of the enemy up the Numa-Numa trail into the forbidding interior along the banks of the Laruma River.

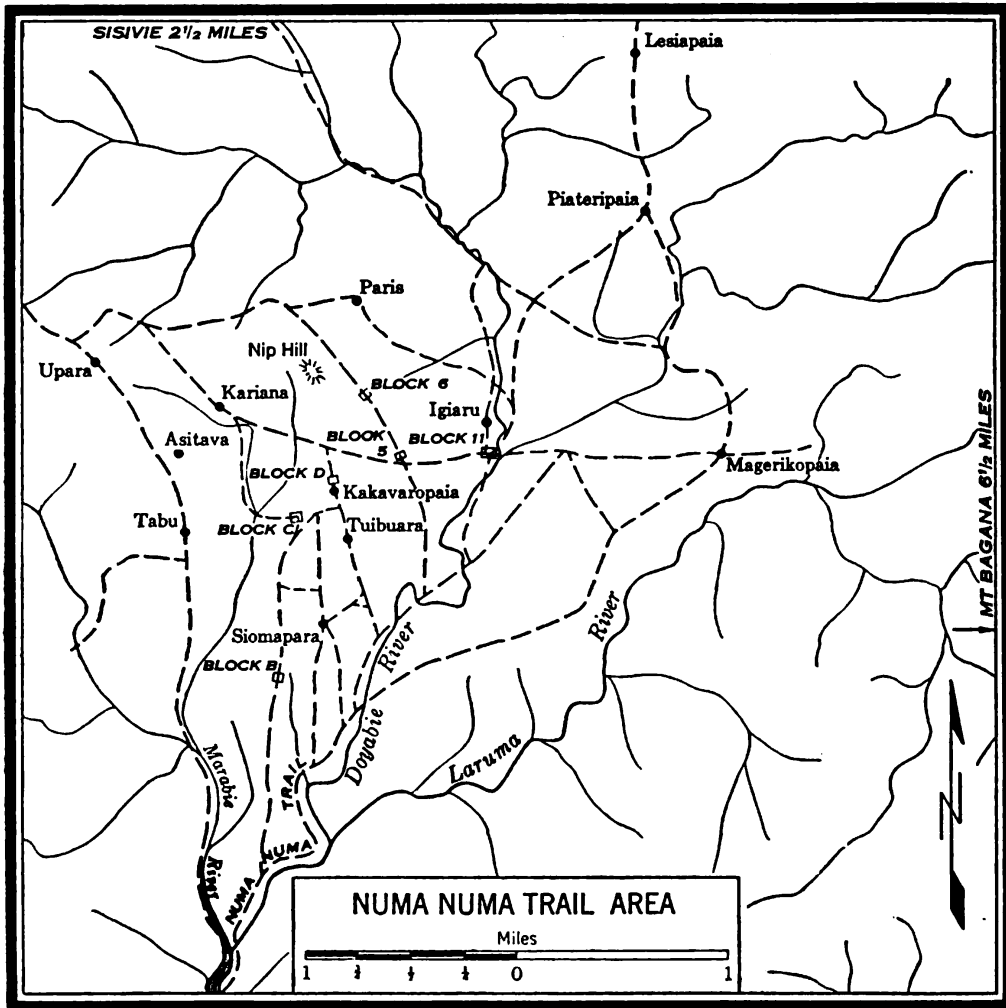
It was not until April 1 that the last pocket of hostile resistance was reported eliminated by troops of the 1st Battalion, Fiji Infantry Regiment, operating in front of the 129th Infantry's positions. As this was being accomplished, the chase began insignificantly when elements of the 148th Infantry moved up to Hill 205, outside the lines, and apparently frightened away a small Japanese garrison by calling for tank support.

On the next day units of the 37th Division, moving up the Numa-Numa trail from Hill 205, crossed the swift-flowing Laruma in the face of heavy concentrations of Japanese rifle and automatic-weapons fire. By nightfall Company I, 148th Infantry, had swept six hundred yards up the west bank of the river from the small bridgehead and had established a perimeter near a small enemy strongpoint.

Reinforced by the Fijians' 1st Battalion and by a 4.2-inch chemical mortar platoon, the force drove through moderate resistance to capture the juncture of the Laruma River and Java Creek on the afternoon of April 3. Four days later advance elements of the force reached the forks of the Laruma almost without incident, locating and examining many abandoned bivouac areas along the way.

Other 37th Division patrols were now ranging as far up the west coast of Bougainville as Cape Moltke without encountering Japanese troops. There were no real evidences of the Japanese having used these coastal trails, either during the approach to the perimeter before the attacks or during the retreat which they were now making.

Intelligence officers of XIV Corps logically deduced that the bulk



of the enemy's forces committed to the futile attacks in the previous month had either withdrawn along the Numa-Numa trail toward the east coast of the island or had started a retreat along the many trails leading toward Bougainville's lush southern tip. Contacts now being made by both the Americal and the 37th indicated that some enemy forces had moved in each direction, but the question now arose as to which of the two directions the majority of the surviving men of the Japanese 6th Division had taken.

In the Laruma River valley the first determined enemy resistance was encountered by units of the 129th Infantry en route to Lesiapaia, a small native village eight thousand yards generally northeast of the Laruma's forks. After killing four enemy in the fire fight which resulted from the contact, the patrol withdrew along the Numa-Numa trail to the banks of the Doyabie River—the west fork of the Laruma—to set

up a strong trail block. Small reconnaissance groups were then sent back to the scene of the action to keep the enemy under observation.

Following this first major contact with the Japanese in the valley, the 37th Division's infantrymen continued with a systematic scouting of the entire sector, locating, attacking and destroying many enemy bivouacs and defensive positions. In an endeavor to prevent the enemy from moving toward the perimeter once again, blocks were established at points on the Numa-Numa trail and on many of the other small trails in the hill-studded area.

On July 16 combat operations of the Americal Division entered a new and more extended phase when the 2d Battalion, 164th Infantry, under Major Veon M. McConnell, relieved troops of the 37th Division's 145th Infantry in the Laruma River valley. Support of the activities of the 164th's 2d Battalion now fell to Battery B, 245th Field Artillery, as it moved into positions once occupied by a firing battery of the 135th Field Artillery. All trail blocks manned by the 145th Infantry were relieved on station by units of the 164th while the battery of 105s was being registered on a new base point by an air observer.

Attached to the 164th for operations along the Numa-Numa trail was a section of 4.2-inch mortars from the 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion, a platoon of 155mm guns from the 49th Coast Artillery Battalion, four messenger dogs and two scouts dogs and their handlers from the 25th Quartermaster War Dog Platoon, and a hundred native carriers under the direction of a New Zealand officer.

Operations in this sector were begun by the 164th's 2d Battalion with the primary mission of the establishment and development of a base camp from which a detailed reconnaissance of the Kariana-Igiaru-Magerikopaia area could be carried out, from which trail blocks closing hostile routes of approach could be maintained in strength and from which enemy forces in the sector could be located, harassed and eventually destroyed.

The terrain was found to be of distinct advantage to the Japanese. It consists of a vast series of ridges and sharp peaks split by extremely deep ravines, the steep sides of which rise almost straight up from the dark and muddy floor of the valley. With but few exceptions the hills are covered with Bougainville's usually dense rain-forests and heavily matted undergrowth. The precipitous nature of the terrain in the area makes the entire valley virtually impassable save for routes along the few existing trails.

It was soon learned that the trails themselves were as steep as the

ridges over which they ran. Progress up the tortuous slopes often had to be made with the assistance of the many vines which hung alongside the narrow tracks. That any of the infantry units operating in the valley enjoyed any success at all in this forbidding-looking territory can only be attributed to the courage and dogged determination of the riflemen who were the backbone of the Americal.

First finding that the Japanese had organized strong defenses on the hill to the immediate front of Block D, near the village of Kakavaroapaia, plans were made to keep the hill under surveillance and to utilize all available mortars and artillery in harassing the positions and softening them for eventual attack. In order to better support the operations now taking shape, the 245th Field Artillery's Battery B displaced by platoons approximately three thousand yards up the bed of the Laruma on July 19.

On the morning of July 20, following an all-night peppering of the enemy positions by mortars and artillery, elements of Company E, 164th Infantry, dropped into the draw south of the enemy-held hill, now dubbed Nip Hill, and moved cautiously up its steep and tricky slopes. Once in position, the troops attacked and soon succeeded in grinding out a 200-yard gain before being forced to halt by intense counterfire from many hidden enemy automatic weapons. Three points were quickly consolidated on the hill, after which a battalion observation post was set up.

Meanwhile, a long-range 2d Battalion patrol had worked its way into the Sisivie area, eight thousand yards generally north of Nip Hill, and had surrounded a small enemy-held village. Surprising the unsuspecting Japanese garrison with a heavy burst of rifle and machine-gun fire, the patrol killed seven and wounded many more before the fire was returned. At the conclusion of the brief skirmish the patrol withdrew to the trail-block area south of Igiaru.

On July 25 the 93d Reconnaissance Troop was ordered to move into the valley under tactical attachment to the 164th Infantry. This unit, the only Negro unit now in combat on the island, was subsequently assigned ambush missions at points along the Numa-Numa trail to the north of Igiaru.

The 164th Infantry's 2d Battalion gave way to the 1st Battalion on the following day as Major John A. Gossett brought his troops into the area. The relief of all trail blocks was completed by mid-afternoon and operations continued.

Aggressive 1st Battalion patrols quickly established the fact that the Japanese were now occupying strong positions on a number of com-

manding ridges near Igiaru. On July 28 a reinforced platoon from one of the battalion's rifle companies moved into the fortified area and tackled the strongest of these positions. In an all-day, mortar- and artillery-supported assault the platoon attempted to pierce the defense, but stout hostile resistance foiled each thrust. During the attack two men from the platoon were killed and a thorough search of the area after contact was broken revealed that the Japanese had taken the bodies.

It was not until August 2 that another attempt was made to drive the enemy from the series of ridges, but the Japanese held fast. On the following morning, in the wake of a heavy mortar and artillery preparation, the attacks were renewed. Once again, forces of the 1st Battalion were unable to effectively neutralize the well hidden enemy rifles and machine guns on the thickly covered hills.

These actions now proved to the commander of the 1st Battalion that the enemy held every advantage of terrain and position and that further attacks against the positions would be both futile and costly, at least for the time being. As a result, only strong reconnaissance patrols were sent into the area to keep a constant check on local activities.

Meanwhile, the U.S. positions on Nip Hill had become the center of much activity on the part of both the 164th Infantry and the Japanese in emplacements nearby. Snipers fired intermittently into the North Dakotans' defenses, and occasionally added short bursts of machine-gun fire and light hails of mortar shells. Not to be outdone, the men of the 164th returned round for round, according to type, with a somewhat more accurate and devastating effect on the enemy.

By morning of August 6 the 3d Battalion of the 164th had completely taken over operations in the valley. Artillery support was now being offered by Battery C, 245th Field Artillery, which unit had relieved its battalion's Battery B on July 29.

The Japanese welcomed the 3d Battalion into the sector at 0630 on the morning of August 7 by moving into action suddenly. Apparently moving down from the vicinity of Kariana, the enemy launched simultaneous attacks on the battalion's Blocks C and D and on the Nip Hill positions. Taking advantage of surprise, the attackers quickly succeeded in poking a wedge into the North Dakotans' positions on the left flank of Block D. When this assault was finally contained, a savage counterattack resulted in the rapid reduction of the salient at great cost to the Japanese. In the meantime, the other two Japanese attacks on the Americal Division positions were being beaten back before penetrations could be made.

Just as the triple-pronged attack was reaching its peak, and as

calls for artillery fire were pouring back to the 245th's Battery C, the 221st Field Artillery's Battery C appeared on the scene to take over direct support. Severance of telephone communications with the positions under attack added to the confusion, but by mid-afternoon the relief had been completed, wire communication had been restored, and the battery of 155mm howitzers was registered on its base point. Late in the afternoon the 221st's liaison officers and forward observers reached the forward positions to relieve those of the 245th on duty with the 3d Battalion.

After having first scored local gains and then having suffered a sound defeat in the attack on Block D, the Japanese hovered around the positions for the rest of the day. Intermittent exchanges of rifle fire and hand grenades marked the afternoon's activities. Once darkness had fallen over the eerie jungle, the exchanges became more frequent and the volume of fire increased. This was but a prelude to a new enemy attempt to crack the 164th's positions.

At about 2000 hours an unestimated number of Japanese crept quietly up to the small perimeter at the block and attempted to infiltrate into its center. Alert riflemen, however, discovered the enemy and drove groups of them back into the undergrowth with showers of lead. For the next two hours other groups stole up to the block from all sides and each was beaten off in turn.

When dawn finally broke over the trees above more than thirty enemy dead were found outside the perimeter. Evidences were found that the bodies of other dead or wounded had been dragged away down the slopes atop which the trail block was situated. In addition, scouts reported ten fresh graves in the area, indicating that at least that many more had been killed in the almost-around-the-clock attacks.

By this time a complete report had been received from a 1st Battalion combat patrol which had operated in the Sisivie area during the first four days in August. Company B, reinforced by a small group of native guides and carriers, left Block D at 0800 on August 1. By nightfall the company had moved over the tortuous trails to within two thousand yards of Sisivie. Using the first night's bivouac as a base camp, the following day was spent scouting a large enemy encampment near Sisivie. Early on the morning of August 3 the company was further reinforced by a platoon from the 164th's Antitank Company as completed attack plans were made known to the troops.

At 0945, not long after the new platoon had arrived, the company completed a ring around the Japanese camp without having been

observed. An expectant quiet now fell over the troops as they awaited the signal to fire on the hostile force. When the signal came not many minutes later, a murderous fusillade shattered the stillness as the startled enemy began reacting to the bold maneuver.

As the men of Company B continued to pour deadly fire into the bivouac, it was noticed that the area contained many more shacks than had been reported seen by earlier reconnaissance groups and that the strength of the Japanese was apparently that of at least one company. In spite of the increased risk, the North Dakotans remained in position until increasingly intense fire from a number of enemy heavy machine guns began to force a withdrawal. In the brief and surprising assault, thirty-seven enemy were reported killed and many more were believed to have been wounded. An uncounted number of other Japanese were thought to have been killed in the shacks when automatic-weapons fire swept through them in the opening seconds of the fray. In this action the patrol suffered only one casualty when one of the company officers was wounded.

This maneuver was typical of many carried out by efficient patrols of all three regiments of the Americal Division in actions in the Laruma River valley and in other sections of the island. Gaining confidence in themselves and in their leaders in this unusual type of warfare, the infantrymen of the Division were fast becoming men to be feared in the dense, dark and damp jungles of evil, forbidding Bougainville.

After only scattered contacts with enemy bivouacs, defenses and ambushes, the 3d Battalion of the 164th, on August 15, was relieved by the 2d Battalion. After completing the relief of all blocks in the sector, the battalion sent out a number of patrols from the trail blocks. Information obtained from these patrols, plus what departing 3d Battalion intelligence officers supplied, showed that the Japanese were strengthening positions throughout the area and that new emplacements had been set up around Sisivie.

Keeping the enemy under constant observation and ever on the alert, groups from the battalion engaged in frequent clashes with enemy patrols and ambushes. Artillery and mortar shells fell on countless targets of opportunity as efforts were being made to break the core of Japanese resistance in the sector. Air power was turned loose on targets near Sisivie on August 22 as eight tons of bombs fell into the undergrowth with only fair effect.

The 164th's 1st Battalion came back into the area to relieve the 2d Battalion, bringing new vigor against the enemy. On August 25, the

day following the return of the 1st Battalion, the 93d Reconnaissance Troop, operating under control of the North Dakotans' new regimental commander, Lt. Col. William J. Mahoney, was sent north of Magerikopaia to ambush Japanese moving around in the vicinity of the Doyabie River, thereby cutting the Numa-Numa trail at this point.

On August 28 a 2d Battalion patrol, working back toward friendly territory from Kariana, succeeded in reaching the crest of Nip Hill from the north. This move trapped an undetermined number of Japanese between the patrol and positions of the 2d Battalion on a portion of the hill to the south.

Ordered to hold fast, the patrol awaited the arrival of reinforcements sent to aid in keeping the enemy in the jaws of the vise. At 0530 on August 29, fifteen Japanese struck at the new positions, and in the futile, weak attempt to relieve the U.S. pressure, three of the attackers were killed and most of the others were wounded.

Sometime during the day of August 29, the remaining enemy on Nip Hill, realizing that their present positions were being made most untenable, silently withdrew into the darkness of the jungles in the direction of Igiaru. When the patrol finally passed through the abandoned positions on the hill it was estimated that the emplacements and dugouts in the area had held at least a Japanese company.

Operations of the 164th Infantry had been supported since August 7 by single batteries of the 221st Field Artillery, all armed with the new M1 155mm howitzers. Battery A, relieving Battery C of the 245th, was the first into the area, and this unit remained for ten days until relieved by the 221st's Battery C. On August 30, Battery B began its tour of duty in the valley. Meanwhile, the pair of 155mm guns from the 49th Coast Artillery had been carrying on its role of general support, paying particular attention to long-range missions.

On September 2 the 182d Infantry stepped into the picture as its 3d Battalion took over from the 1st Battalion of the 164th. Commanded by Col. Floyd E. Dunn, the 182d was to continue with the mission assigned the North Dakotans on July 17.

By now, however, operations in this hill-pocked sector had dwindled down to a series of scattered contacts with Japanese who were now showing an increasingly distinct unwillingness to fight it out with the Americal. By September 14, after a relatively uneventful tour of duty in the valley, the 3d Battalion yielded its positions and its missions to the regiment's 2d Battalion.

Two days later direct support of the 182d passed from the 221st

Field Artillery to the 246th as the latter's Battery C moved into river-bed positions to relieve the 155mm howitzers of the 221st's Battery B. Without a break in the continual availability of artillery support, liaison officers and forward observers from the 246th went forward to join the 182d in the advance positions and trail blocks.

In an effort to inflict additional casualties on the enemy, Company K of the 182d set out on September 16 on combat and reconnaissance missions in the Sisivie area, establishing a base camp near the objective on the same afternoon. By September 21 patrols from the company had completed a series of small-scale attacks on bivouacs in the zone of operations and had reported killing seventeen Japanese.

The Bay Staters' 1st Battalion assumed control of the sector on September 22 and continued with the aggressive patrolling characteristic of the infantrymen of the Americal around the Numa-Numa trail. A patrol moving through the Piateripaia area later made a number of strong but fleeting contacts and, finally, on September 27, ran headlong into a group of from twenty-five to thirty enemy firmly entrenched on the Numa-Numa trail near this village.

Meanwhile, another 1st Battalion patrol, given the task of eliminating known enemy positions near Sisivie, pushed toward the well defended village from the south. After arriving in the area, orders from the battalion command post resulted in a change of mission for the patrol. Accordingly, ambushes were now set up in the sector and a number of contacts were soon reported. The patrol returned to the command post on September 29 with reports that seven enemy had been killed without loss to the group.

On September 24 a small patrol went forward from the 182d's Block 5 to search the body of a Japanese soldier killed earlier in the morning. While near the body, the group suddenly came under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire which inflicted serious casualties on the troops. Following the rapid withdrawal of the patrol, reconnaissance was initiated in an effort to determine the strength and disposition of the Japanese near the block.

Subsequent reports revealed that the enemy maintained strong positions on commanding ground near the Bay Staters' positions. So strong were the positions that a series of attacks beginning on September 26 failed to dislodge the Japanese. Apparently angered by the U.S. assaults, the enemy retaliated with a counterthrust. The Japanese were showing a willingness to fight back.

On the night of September 27, after the last attack of the 182d on

the positions near Block 5 had failed to gain ground, one platoon in a perimeter opposite the enemy was subjected to an all-night attack by an estimated eighty to a hundred Japanese. Although suffering heavily from the relentless onslaught, dawn found the platoon still able to hold out.

Realizing now that the Japanese in the Laruma River valley were becoming more aggressive and that firm countermeasures would have to be taken, General McClure ordered the remainder of the 182d Infantry into the sector. In doing so, he instructed the regimental commander to surround and annihilate all Japanese forces in the area bounded by Blocks 5, 6, 7, 9 and 11.

By 1200 on September 29 all three battalions of the Bay State regiment had begun early encirclements of the designated area. On September 30 Battery A, 221st Field Artillery, moved into positions near those of the 246th's Battery C to add more fire power to the artillery. The 49th Coast Artillery sent more 155mm guns to augment its weapons already in action.

As the encirclement got under way, the 1st and 3d Battalions took up positions on trails blocking all approaches to the area from the east, the south and the west. The 2d Battalion headed out into the jungles to cut all northern approaches, thereby completing the ring of trail blocks. The latter battalion, less Company E, moved north and west of Block 6, swung east at the village of Paris and then spread eastward across the northern extremities of the area to be attacked. Company E, by October 2, had moved six hundred yards north of Block 11 to join the remainder of the 2d Battalion.

Early on the morning of October 3, following a tremendously heavy artillery preparation, all units undertook simultaneous attacks on Japanese positions as the ring began to close. Throughout the remainder of the day the Massachusetts infantrymen poured heavy fire into a host of enemy positions in all parts of the sector. Impressive gains were scored early and often as the enemy forces were being killed or driven off in confusion into the underbrush.

For the next two days the attacks continued without abatement as point after point of Japanese resistance was being broken. By the evening of October 5 the regimental commander was able to report to General McClure that the mission had been accomplished. More than fifty enemy pillboxes and emplacements within the ring had been found and destroyed. A total of 105 Japanese had been killed, four had been captured and many more had been wounded.

Staff Sgt. Victor B. McGuire, of Jochin, West Virginia, personally accounted for one of the four positions captured during the regimental action when, on October 4, he came across a by-passed emplacement showing definite signs of enemy occupancy. After attempting to force the Japanese inside the position to surrender under fire, Sergeant McGuire, not knowing how many enemy occupied the position, seized the initiative and jumped into the doorway to force a capitulation. Much to his surprise McGuire found only one unarmed, thoroughly frightened and dazed Japanese soldier cowering in a corner of the dugout. The Japanese surrendered.

Patrols were now sent into the Piateripaia area in an effort to obtain information on which to base new attacks against known positions around this village. Almost immediately strong contacts were reported by reconnaissance groups attempting to reach the village. Once the necessary scouting was completed, plans were made for an all-out assault against the enemy in the sector.

On October 2 the 2d Battalion, once again less Company E, moved north from the trail-block area to envelop the village and begin an attack from the north. At the same time Company E was instructed to proceed eastward to Magerikopaia and then turn north toward a point four hundred yards south of Piateripaia from which a diversionary attack would be launched in conjunction with the battalion thrust from the north.

However, Nature suddenly went on the offensive against the 182d Infantry and its attached troops as the movement to Piateripaia was undertaken. As was to be expected, rain clouds gathered over the island on October 7, but these now seemed darker and more ominous than usual. A light wind toyed with the first drops of rain which fell rather quietly, but suddenly, as the rain began to pour down in torrents, strong gusts of wind whipped the sheets of water into every corner of the blackened jungle.

In alarming proportions, the volume of falling rain and the power of the wind rose over the entire valley, and over the entire Empress Augusta Bay area as well. Weather experts were soon sending out hurricane warnings, warnings which came too late.

For a seemingly endless three hours a deluge of rain, driven with irresistible force through the area by tree-bending winds, smothered the troops and the positions they held. Then, almost as quickly as it had begun, the storm abated and a now-strange quiet fell over the area, broken only by the drippings from the trees and vines.

In all sections of the valley casualties were now being reported as a result of falling branches and trees. Broken bones were numerous, and more than just a few infantrymen now nursed bruises caused by the wind-scattered debris. But this was not all.

Not long after the storm had passed, artillerymen in positions on the bed of the Laruma River noticed that the river was rising at a too-rapid rate. Within a matter of minutes a flash flood, raging madly toward the sea, swept into and through the gun positions of both firing batteries and continued on down to the bay. With the tons of water went supplies and ammunition, communications wire and radios. Only the weight of the 105mm and 155mm howitzers, now abandoned in midstream, kept them from being smashed into uselessness on the rocky bed of the Laruma.

The brief campaign conducted against the Americal by Nature adequately pointed out that not all the acts of heroism within the Division were confined to front-line units or activities. By the time the Laruma River had settled back to normal, more than forty men owed their lives to a pair of Bay Staters, Sgt. Frederick DeStefano, of Somerville, and Pvt. Bernard Doucette, of North Wilmington. At the height of the flash flood the angry, swirling waters of the Laruma stalled two truck-loads of men in midstream as the vehicles were attempting to ford the river. DeStefano, driver of one of the trucks, struggled to the river bank, enlisted Doucette's help and secured a stout rope to a nearby tree. He then managed to make his way back to the trucks in midstream, rigged the line to one of the trucks and began urging the men to move quickly to dry land. He and Doucette, during the evacuation of the stranded men, moved back and forth along the line, helping men who were faltering or who were being dragged under by the force the swollen river exerted. Within a short time every man in the group had been safely evacuated to the shore.

Troops of the 57th Engineers operating in support of the 182d in the valley also felt the weight of the waters. Two water points serving the sector were destroyed and seventy-five per cent of the roads and bridges winding back and forth through the valley were rendered impassable. One enlisted man was lost when he was caught in the flood and hurtled downstream.

Taking no notice of the time of day or night, the troops dug into the mass of scattered and damaged equipment as the flood waters receded. Ordnance officers checked the eight howitzers and pronounced them safe to fire once they were cleaned.

By now it was found that wire communications throughout the entire

regimental sector had been almost completely torn out by the wind, the rain and the flood. Rather than take time to repair the countless breaks in the existing net, new lines were laid to all units. The morning of October 8 found all units ready to continue with the operations against the Japanese.

Reaching positions south of Piateripaia and scouting the territory prior to the diversionary assault, patrols from Company E found that the village was strongly held by at least one company of Japanese infantry. While the remainder of the 2d Battalion moved into positions in the north from which the main effort would be launched, observers with Company E adjusted mortar and artillery concentrations on Piateripaia with devastating effects.

To the north of the village, however, the bulk of the 2d Battalion was encountering trouble in getting into the assigned position on schedule. Native guides leading the force to the jump-off point were unable to locate the proper trail into the area due to the difficulties imposed on the entire group by the rugged terrain. By October 9 it became evident that even if the force was able to reach its destination in a short time its troops would be too exhausted to carry out an efficient attack on the objective. Consequently, orders were radioed to the battalion for a return to the rear. Company E remained in position south of Piateripaia adjusting artillery and mortar fire on choice targets of opportunity until relieved on October 12.

Operations of the 182d Infantry in the Laruma River valley came to a close on October 13 when the 1st Battalion, 132d Infantry, moved in to relieve the entire regiment. Control of all patrols and combat activities, as well as of attached units, now passed to Col. Claude M. McQuarrie, commander of the Illinois regiment.

Direct support of the sector had passed back to the 221st Field Artillery on October 11 when Battery C of the 246th Field Artillery was ordered to return to base camp, leaving the medium battalion's Battery A in position to continue firing.

The mission now assigned the 132d in the sector was threefold. With one battalion, the regiment was to hold an area approximately five thousand yards in width extending from a trail junction north of Upara eastward to the village of Magerikopaia. With additional troops, the 132d was to drive the enemy from strong positions around Piateripaia and subsequently hold the area against counterattacks which might develop. Further, other units of the regiment were to harass the enemy in the vicinity of Sisivie. For ease in referring to the trio of areas included in

the orders to the regiment, that to be held by one battalion was designated as Area A, that around Piateripaia was labelled Area B and the Sisivie section became known as Area C.

On October 14, after the 1st Battalion had completed the relief of the 182d in Area A, the 132d's 3d Battalion moved into an assembly area at the junction of the Laruma and the Doyabie Rivers prior to launching attacks in Area B. The regiment's forward command post was set up in the same area occupied by that of the 182d, at a point five hundred yards north of the Laruma-Doyabie junction.

Battery B of the 221st Field Artillery had moved into the area on October 12 to take up positions some two thousand yards above those of Battery A. In order to be able to fire high-angle fire from the floor of the valley, however, many trees had to be blown down or stripped. It was not until October 14 that the battery completed registration on its base point and on several check points in the target area. On the following morning Battery A was relieved of its support mission and ordered back to its base camp.

Actions in Area A, the 1st Battalion area, after October 14, were generally confined to small-scale contacts as reconnaissance and combat patrols scoured the sector. In the only counterblow made by the Japanese during October a small 1st Battalion patrol was ambushed on the 15th at a point some distance south of Piateripaia. Four members of the patrol were killed and several others were wounded as the enemy inflicted damage on the group and melted away in the undergrowth.

In the meantime, the commander of the 3d Battalion, preparing for his maneuver against the Japanese in Area B, dispatched patrols into the zone of action. Efforts were now being made to locate a new approach which would enable the battalion to cut off the enemy in Piateripaia by blocking the trail between this village and Lesiapaia, a thousand yards farther to the north. In spite of the troubles the rugged terrain inflicted on the groups, a trail was found which had not been used in previous operations. This trail, it was thought, would allow the entire battalion to move up without being detected.

On October 19 the 3d Battalion closed station at its assembly area and moved out over the new trail into Area B. By early afternoon of the fifth day, after establishing temporary bivouacs along the route and thoroughly searching for signs of enemy ahead, the battalion reached a point 1,500 yards southeast of the objective. Plans were now made to attack on the morning of October 26 after the last reconnaissance patrols had reported back to the command post.

At 0615 on October 26, following a fifteen-minute artillery preparation, Companies I and K moved out. The two companies shortly reached a point on the trail approximately a thousand yards northeast of Piateripaia, at which point they split. Company I moved northeast to secure the battalion against attack by enemy forces in the village of Lesiapaia while Company K headed southwest to strike at Piateripaia from the rear.

By 0800 the forward elements of Company K had run into the outer fringes of the Japanese defenses around the objective and had driven the outpost guards back into the village. Without delay a barrage of 60mm mortar fire was adjusted ahead as the pressure on the enemy was increased. Contact was maintained with the Japanese for the rest of the day, but strong defensive positions closer to the village held the company gains almost to a minimum.

In the thick of the fight Lt. Col. John V. Belmonte, of Chicago, commander of the 121st Medical Battalion, proved that grave danger meant little to members of the medical profession in forward areas while wounded men required treatment. When an Illinois infantryman fell seriously wounded extremely close to an enemy position, Colonel Belmonte rushed to his side, administered first aid and helped in his removal to a safer location seventy-five yards to the rear. The location chosen was, itself, under almost direct hostile mortar and machine-gun fire, but the medical officer, sensing that a further delay in the treatment of the wounds might cost the man his life, ordered preparations made for immediate surgery. Using only a flashlight for illumination, he then performed a major emergency operation with the coolness, deliberation and efficiency he would certainly have exhibited had he been standing in an average clean, well lighted operating room. Colonel Belmonte's daring act of heroism, carried out with an apparent lack of concern for his own welfare, typical of the medical profession's devotion to duty in the face of insurmountable obstacles, saved the stricken soldier's life.

Private Edward L. Kelly, of Huntington, Pennsylvania, a company aid man, similarly risked his life to bring aid to fallen fellow soldiers. Four times during the day's bitter battle Kelly crawled to within twenty-five yards of a Japanese pillbox from which rifle and heavy machine-gun fire was dealing telling blows to render first aid to the wounded. On one of these heroic missions he calmly gave blood plasma to a seriously wounded enlisted man, exposing himself to the full view of the enemy in so doing.

Company I, meanwhile, in its progress northeastward toward Lesiapaia, contacted a small group of enemy on the main trail. Rapid offensive

action killed one of the Japanese and scattered the rest. Shortly before 1100 a group of unoccupied positions was discovered on a high ridge over which the trail passed. These were quickly occupied by the men of the company in order to deny their use to the Japanese.

Not long after Company I moved into the Japanese positions an enemy force was seen moving up the opposite slope with the apparent intention of occupying these same emplacements. The force, estimated to be about a hundred men, moved boldly up the grade, seemingly unaware that American tenants had settled down on the ridge.

A withering fire from all weapons of Company I greeted the Japanese as they neared the crest and the fire continued until the confused enemy force completed its withdrawal. On the following morning thirteen bodies were found on the slopes, with evidences that many more had been killed or wounded in the brief skirmish.

Preparing to attack again on the morning of October 27, Company K sent out small reconnaissance groups to attempt to find some way through the tightly knit defenses. The patrols hurried back to inform the company commander that the Japanese had fled during the night. Quickly the company moved south through the area, finding the bodies of a half-dozen Japanese killed in the previous day's battle.

These actions of the 3d Battalion practically cleared Area B of all enemy resistance. Small-scale contacts continued to be made by battalion patrols as minor mopping-up operations continued. Company L, on October 27, ran through a small group of Japanese east of Piateripaia, killed six and chased the rest off into the jungle.

Having successfully completed its mission, the 3d Battalion turned over its sector to the regiment's 2d Battalion on October 29. Company G took over positions occupied by Company I northeast of Piateripaia on October 26, setting this up as the northernmost outpost of the 2d Battalion. On the following day the 2d Battalion added Area A to its zone of operations, relieving the 1st Battalion of all combat responsibilities.

Following the entry of the 132d Infantry's 2d Battalion into action in the Laruma River valley, the Japanese increased their patrol activity, paying particular attention to the Company G outpost northeast of Piateripaia, that "stolen" by Company I on October 26. Between October 31 and November 7 a dozen Japanese were killed trying to probe the company defenses on the ridge. The increasing enemy activity now pointed to the probability of a counterattack against the outposts and steps were quickly taken to cope with this situation.

On the morning of November 7 a patrol from Company G was sent

north with the mission of circling probable enemy positions opposite the outpost and obtaining as much information as possible concerning the Japanese strength in the immediate area. Wall-like slopes of hills presented insurmountable barriers for the patrol and by the following afternoon it was forced to return to the company perimeter with no success to report.

The upswing in enemy movements around Company G was the prelude to an all-out attack which took shape on November 9. At 0400 a force of some fifty Japanese swarmed up the northern slope of the ridge under a sudden hail of small-arms, automatic-weapons and knee-mortar fire. By dawn, after more than two hours of bitter fighting, an enemy withdrawal had been forced through a determined stand by the Illinois riflemen. An accurate count of the enemy dead was offset by the fact that the Japanese dragged away many of the bodies as they left. At least ten were killed, however, for this number of bodies was found in the area several days later. In spite of the intensity of the hostile fire during the first moments of the strong attack, Company G sustained relatively few casualties.

While Area B was being cleared of the enemy by the 132d's 3d Battalion, operations in Area A, that around Sisivie, were progressing fairly satisfactorily. Establishing a base camp halfway between Block 5 and Sisivie on October 20, Company F of the 132d sent strong reconnaissance patrols forward into the objective area. Later the same afternoon one reinforced platoon from the company spotted twenty enemy about seven hundred yards southwest of the village. Striking at this group on the following morning, the platoon killed five Japanese.

Since it was thought that no additional risk would be involved by doing so, the company's base camp was displaced on October 21 to a point two thousand yards southwest of Sisivie. From this new bivouac a number of raiding parties moved across the island divide to make a series of lucrative raids on the enemy positions at Sisivie.

On October 29 Company B relieved Company F on station at the base camp and continued with the operations. Occasional contacts were made from this time until November 4 when Company E took over the assignment. On November 21 two platoons from the latter unit returned to the regimental trail block area, followed six days later by the remainder of the company.

The first elements of the Australian 3d Division headed up the Numa-Numa trail from the main perimeter on November 23 to begin the final relief of the 132d Infantry in the sector and of the last elements

of the Americal Division in actual combat on Bougainville. With the Aussies came their own artillery, the 25-pounders quite familiar to the men of the Division Artillery who had been with Task Force 6814 and the Americal on New Caledonia.

By the evening of November 27 the 1st Battalion, 132d Infantry, and Battery A, 221st Field Artillery, had returned to the well established unit bivouacs within the main perimeter for rest, reorganization and additional training. The last Americal Division combat actions on the island of Bougainville had been completed and the Division was being readied for activities elsewhere.

In the Shadow of Mount Bagana

AS HARDENED AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS OF THE GUADALCANAL campaign first viewed the island of Bougainville from the decks of troop transports moving into Empress Augusta Bay many wondered whether this island would be like the scene of the first offensive against the Japanese. Would it all be the same: the enemy, the rain, the mud, the mosquitoes, the intolerable living conditions, the constant threat of death or tropical illnesses? How could it be different? Was this nothing but another darned island in the Solomons? Yet it *was* different, in many respects, right from the very start, at least *almost* from the start.

Moving ashore from the transports the advance echelons of the Division found things much the same in the way of mud around the beach, much the same in the way of organized confusion in the area just off the beach. Assigned bivouac areas were, at first, barely clearings in the dense, forever damp jungles. But even as the Americal Division arrived on the island to relieve the 3d Marine Division things were taking shape.

The very mission of the troops of XIV Corps made it altogether different from Guadalcanal. The Americal Division and its corpsmate, the 37th Division, were not going anywhere, save on a countless number of reconnaissance patrols in the no man's land outside the lines. During the first two months of 1944, the Americal Division could, in its spare time, build up its half of the beachhead into a livable area.

Although relatively intolerable living conditions existed in some parts of the Division sector in the early days on the island, the men did much on their own initiative to correct these situations. Once all of the necessary sandbag construction work was accomplished on front-line positions, machine-gun and mortar emplacements, howitzer positions, command posts and other vital installations throughout the Division sector, attention was turned to kitchens and individuals' quarters.

Light and heavy log frames were raised for tents of all sizes as

ingenious enlisted men, via "moonlight requisitions," gathered scrap lumber, old boxes and crates to build floors and walks in unit areas. It would seem that all the months the men spent on Bougainville were marked by an almost continuous "home improvement" project on a mass scale.

Before long the tireless 57th Engineers had pushed roads to virtually every company and platoon within the Division. The island's volcanic soil seemed to lend itself well to road construction. Broad, hard-packed highways soon wound back and forth throughout the Division sector and the entire beachhead.

The early parts of the long, dark evenings soon presented a serious problem to command and staff officers for the time between supper and taps was hanging heavily on the hands of all, regardless of rank. Accordingly, the Americal's special service office, through the office of the G-4, pushed efforts to obtain a number of motion picture projectors for the troops.

By early February the enemy air strength was so low in the Solomons and the island's air warning net was so efficient that it was thought safe to open a group of unit outdoor theaters. These were so located that several nearby units could benefit by the motion pictures shown at one unit's theater. A few times, however, the picture was interrupted by air-raid warnings as men scurried out to the protection of adjacent foxholes and dugouts.

Front-line units, however, could not initially benefit by the open-air theater operations at night. To counter this, regimental special service officers borrowed long hospital ward tents in which to show pictures during the day at points behind the front-line positions. Infantrymen packed into the tents bulged the canvas sides as they patiently squatted, kneeled or stood through the ninety-minute shows.

In February Randolph Scott came to Bougainville. Supported by the Americal Division dance band, he put on a number of shows for units and then set off alone on a tour of the front lines, stopping to chat with some of the riflemen unable to see the shows.

As on New Caledonia, Guadalcanal and Fiji, men in candle-lit tents and dugouts supplied other forms of recreation for themselves. On make-shift tables throughout the Division games of poker, casino, cribbage, rummy, hearts and bridge filled idle hours. For some strange reason, however, interest in poker seemed to rise sharply on the last day of any given month, minutes after the men began stepping away from the pay tables.

When the Japanese guns and howitzers opened fire on the perimeter on March 8 all of the Division's motion picture projectors were packed and stored away. Orders from Division headquarters now prohibited troops from gathering in any numbers because of the risk involved. In mid-April, when the last of the enemy guns ceased firing, the nightly shows were resumed with increased tempo.

Chaplains within the Division also felt the orders prohibiting gatherings during the enemy bombardment. These precautionary instructions, however, mobilized the chaplains as a group as they labored to bring divine services to the men. Moving through all units of the Division daily, along the front lines and through the rear areas, the chaplains took handfuls of men, led them to tiny clearings and held their services. During the month-long ban it was not uncommon for chaplains to hold ten or more services each day.

Once the Japanese attacks had been beaten back and the safety of the perimeter had been assured, steps were taken to increase recreational activities within the Americal. Units began clearing away trees and underbrush and leveling ground as athletic fields sprang into existence. Company and battery areas soon sported volleyball courts as unit leagues were formed. A short time later, with savage determination, hand-picked teams of enlisted men were drubbing officers' teams as enlisted spectators smiled with satisfaction.

On the shores of Empress Augusta Bay, a short distance east of the mouth of the Piva River and the Torokina fighter strip, a Division rest camp took shape. Log-framed pyramidal tents were raised to house the men sent here, while ward tents were being turned into recreation spaces. Through the recommendations of unit commanders and surgeons, men from all units, on an allotted basis, were sent to the camp for a week's rest. During stays at the camp the men enjoyed freedom to do as they wished while partaking of the best food available within the Americal.

As recreational activities increased in later months, the Division rest camp became a training site for boxers preparing for Division and corps championship tournaments. With Capt. Arthur Ballinger, Division special service officer, as master of ceremonies, and Capt. James I. Sikes, provost marshal, as referee, the first bouts were held on the evening of May 12, 1944. In the best bout of the evening, Pvt. Oliver Hill, of Syracuse, New York, outpointed Pvt. Santiago Ruiz, of Tulare, California, in a brilliant display.

Early April marked the first peak in divine services for Catholics, Protestants and Jews alike as the ban on gatherings was lifted. For the

Catholics and Protestants it was Easter time; for the Jewish officers and men it was the time of Passover. Chaplains of all faiths guided the Division through these holy days with prayers for success in this war against the Axis and for a world-wide peace in the days which would follow the victory.

Again, on Sunday, May 14, it seemed that many hundreds of men were drawn to divine services once more. This was Mother's Day the world over, and the thoughts and prayers of all were turned toward the first love in their lives.

In dayrooms set up in unit areas Special Service radios were being installed and put into operation. At corps headquarters an island radio station was set up and put into operation on an initially limited basis. The "Mosquito Network," as it called itself, gave forth with up-to-the-minute news of the world, with the latest in hit tunes from the States and with local events around the island. On June 3 a group of officers and enlisted men from the 182d Infantry reenacted the Bay Staters' part in the grim battle for Hill 260 for the benefit of those who knew little of it.

On June 7 the entire beachhead buzzed with the news of the invasion of France by Allied forces under Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. This news came not long after that of the capture of Rome by Allied forces in Italy. These two items brought out a wave of speculation concerning the length of the war in Europe. Could it be brought to a conclusion swiftly? Could the capture of Rome mean that Allied troops in Italy would soon break through into southern Austria? How long would it be before Nazi Germany would fall? How long would it be before all Allied attention could be turned to the defeat of Japan?

Closely related to these questions was one which the older veterans of the Americal Division had been asking for many weeks and months: When do I get to go home? This all-important question put in its first appearance after the fighting on Guadalcanal had ended, and it surged back and forth through the Division on the crest of a wave of malaria on Viti Levu in the Fijis. It died down during the first few months here on Bougainville, but with the safety of the perimeter assured, it had put in a new appearance in late March.

On March 22, however, rumors of men being sent home had halted temporarily when something concrete developed. In accordance with War Department plans a rotation policy was put into operation. Taking into consideration available space on shipping returning to the United States, the Americal was allotted a limited number of berths. Based on rank

and length of service overseas, the quota was distributed among the units on a pro-rated basis. By rank, names of those eligible for shipment back home were placed in hats or helmets in each unit and drawn. Selected men then hurriedly packed, said their goodbyes and hustled to the beach to board the ships for the first leg of the trip back to civilization.

The long-rumored rotation policy was now in operation, but, sadly enough, the monthly quotas were hardly high enough to put a dent in the number of officers and men eligible for selection. As the months on Bougainville passed, however, the quotas did show a steady increase. Morale alternately waxed and waned among the older men as rumors sifted through the Division concerning the size of the next quota. All seemed to hold out, though, on the hope that next month would be their month.

Under instructions from Division headquarters, some five thousand men of the Americal gathered at the large parade ground near Evansville. Seated on a newly constructed stage was the Americal Division dance band, quietly awaiting word to begin festivities.

Suddenly, Pepsodent smiles broke out on the faces of all as Bob Hope stepped to the microphone to begin the first of two one-hour shows for the Americal. A short time later, after gales of laughter had penetrated the jungled edges of the parade ground, Hope introduced attractive and shapely Patti Thomas, the first American girl most of the men had seen in months. Added to this were songs by the popular Frances Langford, whose dreamy rendition of "I'm in the Mood for Love" brought nods of agreement from each of those present. It was certainly with reluctance that the men had to listen to Hope's famed "Thanks for the Memory" which marked the end of this brief glimpse of Stateside entertainment.

A few short weeks later, however, at a similar gathering at the parade ground, another crowd of men from the Americal Division listened in strict silence to a world-famous violinist as the strains of "Love in Bloom" wafted through the palms and banyan trees nearby. Putting aside his precious and priceless Stradivarius, Jack Benny stepped forward to begin the second big USO show for the Americal. Aided and abetted by curvaceous Carole Landis and songstress Martha Tilton, Rochester's "boss" breezed through sixty minutes of top-flight entertainment in what seemed to be world-record time.

Two other shows arrived on the island shortly after the Jack Benny show and remained long enough to play at most of the unit theaters within the Division. In one light show vivacious Peggy Alexander, a singer

and dancer, surprised her audiences by calling on several of the men by name, without warning, and "drafting" them into the cast for the evening. The second show, featuring Metropolitan Opera soprano Agnes Davis, brought gems of the concert stage to the Americal.

Meanwhile, all had not been recreation for the officers and men of the Division. For the riflemen there was still much being accomplished outside of the perimeter in almost daily contacts with the Japanese. Within the perimeter new officers and men were being worked into units as training programs were being developed.

For units not actually engaged in combat operations beyond the main line of resistance, training began anew shortly after the smoke had cleared from Hill 260. Operating first on limited schedules, the tempo of training increased as the weeks passed. As on past occasions, small-unit actions were first stressed as a means of indoctrinating newly arrived replacements. Later, full-scale battalion and regimental problems were planned and executed, with the full support of artillery battalions.

Focal point for the full-scale regimental training was Hill 250, near the forks of the Torokina River. After moving into position under cover of darkness, infantry battalions, in turn, "attacked" up the river toward Hill 250, the objective, as direct-support battalions fired live ammunition on "enemy pillboxes" in the river bed. Combat observers stationed on Hill 600 watched the maneuvers and made note of obvious errors in tactics and in the important elements of cover and concealment.

In mid-1944 the regimental cannon companies turned in the tiny 75mm howitzers and were issued the newer and more potent self-propelled 105mm howitzers. The M7 consisted principally of a 105mm howitzer mounted on an open-topped medium tank chassis, with a heavy machine-gun ring mount attached to the top left side of the tank. It was this latter attachment, the ring mount, which brought about the British nickname of "the Priest" for the M7, since the mount looked quite like a pulpit.

The Americal Division staff was quick to realize that the infantry cannoneers would be unfamiliar with the 105mm howitzer and they turned to Division Artillery headquarters for assistance in training the men in its care and tactical use. In order better to plan and supervise the training of the companies, the three units were formed into a Provisional Cannon Battalion headed by a staff of selected artillery officers provided by Division Artillery headquarters.

Training in the use of the new howitzers began almost at the bottom. The new method of service of the piece was drilled into the men who were to form the gun crews while other men of the companies were

learning fire-direction techniques. New to the Division, armored artificers were assigned the task of maintaining the heavy, lumbering, full-tracked vehicles.

As the St. Louis Browns, back in the United States, surprised the sports world by edging the Detroit Tigers out of the American League pennant, the Americal Division's training program took on a new slant. Preparations were made for initial pre-amphibious training in all units of the Division. In new clearings landing-net platforms were quickly raised to train full-equipped troops in the art of moving up and down the intricate rope nets with apparent ease. With increased haste, the training program sped through these subjects and many of others as well.

Back in the recreation field, in the meantime, something new in the sports agenda hit the Division. Under floodlights on a playing field clearing on Matheson Road, near the 245th and 246th Field Artillery Battalions' positions, two six-man touch football teams squared off to start the new trend. Twice weekly thereafter, paralleling the football season at home, unit teams sprinted and dodged up and down the field before increasingly large gatherings of men.

On November 4, as the relatively unimportant combat operations of the Americal were drawing to a close outside the perimeter, Brig. Gen. William H. Arnold, chief of staff of XIV Corps, moved into Division headquarters to relieve Maj. Gen. Robert B. McClure as Commanding General.

Preparing for future actions elsewhere in the Pacific, XIV Corps, at 2400 on November 21, turned over control of the island to Australian II Corps as troops of the latter corps prepared to eliminate all Japanese resistance on Bougainville with a series of lightning-like thrusts. The Aussies were to find, however, that the combination of Bougainville and the Japanese was a tough nut to crack and that although much progress was made heavy fighting would still be in progress at the end of the war.

With practically all troops of the Americal Division back in the perimeter by Thanksgiving Day, the final phase of the training program took on added emphasis. Amphibious training was now being stressed with increased vigor as news of new U.S. victories in other parts of the Pacific reached the island. In December a division of British transports was made available to the Americal for realistic shipboard training and for a series of simulated ship-to-shore assaults.

On December 18, however, the training program was relegated to a secondary though still important role. The publication of a new movement order alerted all units for shipment from Bougainville. Rumors,

nourished by reports of the new fighting, had the Americal Division going everywhere but to Tokyo itself, and had this not been a far-fetched idea, it, too, might have been passed around as the "truth."

The hurried preparations for departure were halted on Christmas Day as packages began arriving from the States almost on schedule. At the chapel at Division headquarters and at chapels in other organizations midnight Mass ushered in this holy day. At other divine services held throughout the remainder of the morning men of the Americal thought prayerfully of their comrades who had given their lives on this island so far removed from home.

After a delightful pause highlighted by gargantuan servings of turkey "and all the fixin's," the packing and crating of equipment began anew. The drive to complete all loading preparations carried units through the end of the year and over into 1945 without a break. The first ships assigned to transport the Division to its new arena of adventure arrived in Empress Augusta Bay on January 4 and loading operations for the first echelon were undertaken immediately.

By 1500 on January 8, 1945 the first two ships bearing units of the Americal Division cleared the reef surrounding the bay and turned generally westward toward the coast of New Guinea. Within two days another pair followed. By January 10 the tenth ship was being loaded at anchor in the bay. It was not until January 27, however, that the last of thirteen ships arrived to take on cargo and troops.

The end of January 1945 found all of the Americal Division, save for a small rear echelon, gone from the island of Bougainville. A little more than a year had been spent on this jungle-laden, volcano-shaken island, a year during which much had taken place to successfully advance the course of the war against Japan.

By early February 1944 Marine and Army troops in the Central Pacific, operating under the control of Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, had wrested the Marshall Islands from the hands of the Japanese, marking the first invasion of territory held by the enemy prior to the war. Meanwhile, with Huon Peninsula cleared in New Guinea, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, later in February and in March, threw the Japanese completely off balance with strong landings on New Ireland and in the Admiralties. He then followed with a powerful thrust at Hollandia, on New Guinea's north coast, which cut off an estimated 150,000 enemy troops to the east.

Admiral Nimitz's forces countered with new assaults in the Central Pacific as Saipan, in the Marianas, fell to the United States. In the naval

action which followed when the Japanese fleet attempted to come to the rescue of their garrison, 140 enemy planes were shot down, fourteen ships were sunk and a half-dozen other surface craft were damaged.

Troops of the Central Pacific command quickly added Guam, nearby, recapturing this vital U.S. outpost which had fallen to the Japanese during the early days of the war. In the Marianas U.S. air units were now based within 1,500 miles of Japan and within a like distance of the Philippine Islands.

By September units under General MacArthur's command had jumped westward to Morotai, at the northern end of the Moluccas chain, just west of New Guinea. Mindanao now lay within easier bombing range as the Japanese began rushing reinforcements into the Philippines. The showdown for 1944 was at hand.

Bold and daring air and surface maneuvers by fleet units under Adm. William F. Halsey, former commander of the South Pacific, changed the situation in the Philippines with a startling suddenness. On October 20, far in advance of the originally planned date, troops of the U.S. Sixth Army crossed the beaches on Leyte, in the east central Philippines, to begin the reconquest of the islands lost to the enemy in 1942. Meanwhile, Central Pacific forces had moved into Peleliu and Angaur in the Palau Islands.

It was into this situation that the Americal Division was now being injected in the early days of 1945. For all intents and purposes, the campaign on Leyte was over and, in early January, Luzon, to the north of Leyte, was becoming a bitter battleground. How the Americal was to be employed was now a matter of guesswork on the part of most of the officers and men. In spite of the impressive victories already scored, much remained to be done before the Philippine Islands could be said to be secure and free. Much more remained to be done before Japanese forces abroad and in the homeland would be beaten into submission.

Meanwhile, On Leyte

THE FALL OF BATAAN AND CORREGIDOR AND OF THE PHILIPPINE Islands as a whole in 1942 marked the lowest ebb of American military fortunes of war in the Pacific. In the weeks and months after overwhelming Japanese pressure had forced the surrender of the islands there was but one thought in General MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area headquarters: The Philippines must be liberated!

After August 7, 1942, all operations in the Pacific seemed to point toward an eventual return to the islands. In the South and Southwest Pacific the routes of advance seemed to aim directly at the heart of this vast archipelago. Forces in the Central Pacific moved by leaps and bounds toward the eastern limits of the Philippines.

The Japanese, meanwhile, cautiously eyed the U.S. gains and, as Southwest Pacific troops struck at Morotai, Nipponese reinforcements were rushed into key Philippine cities and towns from areas as far distant as Manchuria. The enemy seemed to realize how important these islands were to the United States and the Allies. The Japanese high command must have decided that if the U.S. was to finally liberate the Philippines, it would be only at great cost.

By the end of July 1944, the first broad plans for the liberation of the Philippines had been boiled down into more concrete terms in an almost never-ending series of conferences in the Southwest Pacific Area headquarters. Working closely with his staff, General MacArthur had, by this time, selected the principal target areas and had established the invasion dates. The first warning orders were nearly ready to go out to the units concerned.

The plans called for the initiation of Allied operations in the archipelago with a landing on November 15, 1944, at Sarangani Bay in southern Mindanao. This was to be followed on December 7 with an airborne assault aimed at northern Mindanao. These first two assaults, however, were but preliminaries to the main event. The decisive blow was to

fall on December 20 with two corps of Sixth Army making strong amphibious assaults on the island of Leyte, in the east central Philippines.

Planning continued in more detail through August and by early September the first warning orders had been completed and dispatched to the troops designated to make the opening landings. The first stages of the liberation were to be carried out under the command of Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger, commanding general of Sixth Army. Surface units of the 3d and 7th Amphibious Forces were to cover troop transports in the target areas while planes of Allied naval forces were to offer overhead protection and close-in support of subsequent ground actions.

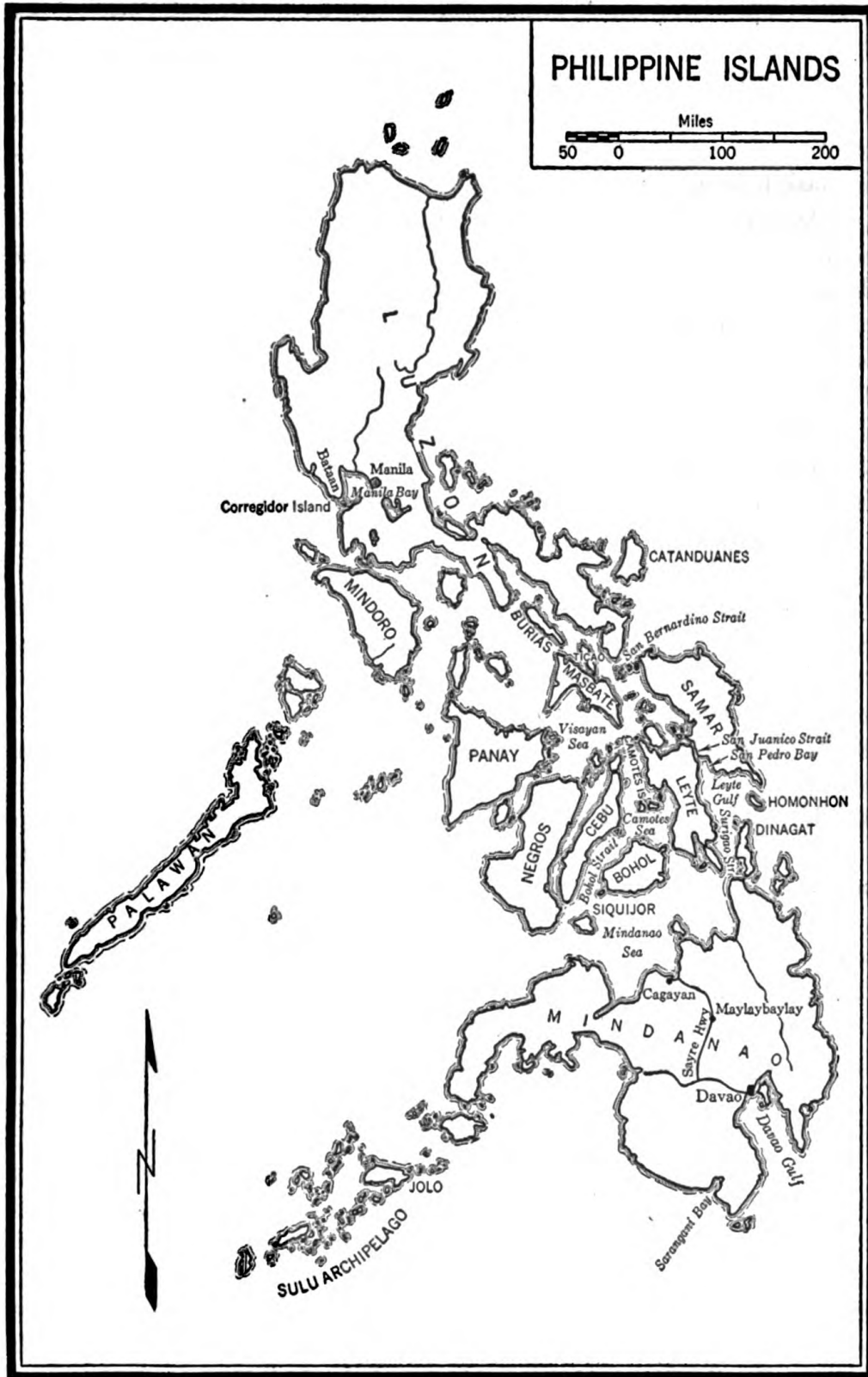
In the meantime, during landing operations at Morotai and at Peleliu, United States aircraft carrier task groups under Adm. William F. Halsey were active in Philippine waters. After striking at choice targets on Mindanao in early September, planes from the carriers followed with a series of devastating raids on airfields and enemy installations in the central Philippines on September 12 and 13. Harbor installations and shipping in the area around Cebu City took a heavy beating in the two-day operations.

Scanning reports from his pilots after the last raids, taking into consideration the overwhelming success achieved, Admiral Halsey deduced that the nature of the Japanese air strength in the islands was such that no significant resistance could be offered to a landing on Leyte in the immediate future. On the afternoon of September 13, in a radio message to his chief, Admiral Nimitz, Halsey strongly recommended an early invasion of Leyte together with a complete cancellation of the preliminary operations on Mindanao.

These surprising suggestions were quickly forwarded by Admiral Nimitz to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on September 13 for consideration and approval. Withdrawing from a meeting which they were attending in Quebec, the Joint Chiefs, within ninety minutes after receiving the message, had drafted and dispatched an approval to Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur.

As he radioed the Joint Chiefs of Staff concerning the new developments, Admiral Nimitz offered to place XXIV Corps, now loading in Hawaii for a planned assault on Yap, at General MacArthur's disposal, contingent upon approval of the recommendations. Knowing now that sufficient troops would be available to carry out the operation, planning conferences at General MacArthur's headquarters set up around-the-clock schedules.

By September 15, after the approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had



been given, new warning orders were issued by Southwest Pacific Area headquarters eliminating all preliminary operations on Mindanao and advancing the planned target date for the major assault to October 20. There was now little time in which to modify the original field orders, but the efficient manner in which the ground work had been laid made the task lighter.

As it now stood, the Leyte operation was to be divided into three tactical phases. The first was to consist of preliminary assault landings designed to secure the eastern entrances to Leyte Gulf. The second phase, the most crucial, was to include the major amphibious assaults on the eastern shores of Leyte, the seizure of the coastal strip between Taclobán and Dulag, the opening of San Juanico and Panaon Straits and the capture of the Carigara area on Leyte's north central coast. The final phase was subsequently to include such overland and shore-to-shore operations as would be deemed necessary to destroy all enemy forces remaining on Leyte and to overcome all enemy resistance in the southern half of the island of Samar.

Assigned to Sixth Army for the impending operation were X and XXIV Corps, the latter on loan from the Central Pacific area. X Corps, comprised of the 1st Cavalry Division and the 24th Infantry Division, was to be commanded by Maj. Gen. Franklin C. Sibert. XXIV Corps, made up of the 7th and 96th Infantry Divisions, was to be led by Maj. Gen. John R. Hodge, former Commanding General of the Americal Division. Assigned directly to Sixth Army headquarters were additional combat troops, among which was the 6th Ranger Infantry Battalion.

To elements of the 6th Rangers fell the honor of making the first landing of liberation in the Philippine Islands on the stormy morning of October 17. In the wake of a preparatory naval bombardment, troops from this battalion landed quietly on Dinagat and Suluan Islands in Leyte Gulf to initiate the first phase of the operations. On the following day other Ranger units landed on Homonhon Island to terminate the phase and gain control of Leyte Gulf.

At 0600 on A-day—October 20—heavy naval guns began a systematic blasting of the eastern coast of Leyte from Taclobán, its capital, south to Dulag. Two hours later the first waves clambered down the landing nets into landing craft to head for the hostile shores. Fanning out up into San Pedro Bay, X and XXIV Corps split to begin drives across the beaches in the face of light to moderate Japanese resistance. A half hour earlier the 21st Infantry Regiment of the 24th Division had landed

without opposition on the northern tip of Panaon Island to secure the strait of the same name.

On the beaches in San Pedro Bay the initial successes scored by Sixth Army were quickly exploited as the 1st Cavalry Division seized Taclobán airfield and followed with the capture of Taclobán itself next day. Meanwhile, the 24th Division secured Palo, after which both divisions of X Corps undertook a northwestward drive toward Carigara. On October 29 the two units made contact south of the objective and halted to prepare plans for a coordinated attack on the town. By the evening of November 2 Carigara had been overrun, thus bringing to a successful conclusion X Corps' part of the vital second phase.

In the meantime, on October 21, in XXIV Corps' zone of action south of X Corps, the 7th Division had taken Dulag and its strategic airstrip and had followed with a westward drive which resulted in the capture of a trio of airfields around Burauen. By October 29 Dagami had been captured after a determined enemy stand.

During this time other elements of the 7th Division had moved south to take Abuyog and had subsequently turned west to open a drive over Leyte's rugged central mountain range. Meanwhile, the 96th Division had completed the elimination of all pockets of resistance in its zone of action. With the capture of Carigara by X Corps on November 2, therefore, the second phase of Sixth Army's plan of attack had been terminated.

Not long after the first landings on the coast of Leyte it became apparent that the Japanese intended to hold the island at all costs. Loss of the island and the Philippines as a whole would, the Japanese high command now no doubt felt, endanger all Japanese gains in the Far East.

On and after October 24 Japanese air strength over the Leyte beachhead increased as strong day and night attacks were made on the troops, the new installations and on the supporting shipping in the gulf. The arrival of planes of Army Air Forces did much to stem the tide of Japanese raids, but enemy fighters managed to keep up a series of dawn and dusk sweeps for some time after the arrival of the first land-based planes.

Boldly hoping to turn back the Allied invasion of the Philippines with a mighty, three-pronged naval blow, Japanese fleet units poured on the steam as they hurried to Leyte Gulf with more than fifty warships of all classes. The first contact with the approaching enemy naval forces was made on October 23 and from this time on the battle grew in intensity. By the evening of October 26, after more than just a few

crucial moments for the Allied vessels, the well conceived enemy plan had miscarried in the face of strong counterblows. The Japanese Navy, dealt a series of crippling attacks, suddenly shrunk to a position of relative impotence as a sea power. This battle—the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea—wrote new records into the history of naval warfare.

In spite of the terrific losses sustained by the Japanese in this decisive naval battle, reinforcements for enemy ground units were now being rushed to Leyte in almost every conceivable type of seagoing conveyance. Into Ormoc, major port on Leyte's west coast, troops were hurried into the rapidly developing campaign in ever-increasing numbers. By early November it became evident that the additional Japanese strength on the island would seriously delay attempts to conclude quickly the third phase of Sixth Army's operations.

This third and final phase of the campaign began on November 3 as the 24th Division struck westward from Carigara. After taking Pinamopohan on the following day, the 24th Division turned south along Highway No. 2 toward Ormoc and soon ran headlong into strong Japanese resistance on Breakneck Ridge, a short distance north of Limon. Heavy seasonal rains, coupled with fanatical Japanese opposition, held up the advance until November 16 when the last enemy pillboxes were eliminated. As the 24th Division resumed a slow but steady advance, the 32d Infantry Division, veterans of the first days of the New Guinea campaign, moved in to take over.

Meanwhile, units of XXIV Corps were driving westward over the tortuous trails among Leyte's mountains while units of the 7th Division, after taking Baybay without incident on November 1, were moving slowly up the west coast toward Ormoc.

In order to close out the third phase at the earliest possible date, to cut off the continual flow of enemy reinforcements through Ormoc and to attack the enemy forces in the rear, plans were made to land fresh American units below Ormoc and to capture the port city as rapidly as possible. On the morning of December 7, therefore, the 77th Infantry Division, newly arrived in the area, stormed ashore at Deposito, three miles south of Ormoc, and caught the Japanese completely unawares.

By December 10 Ormoc was under the control of the 77th Division and a new advance northward through Ormoc Valley to Valencia was gaining ground with significant results. Eleven days later contact was made with units of X Corps driving south from Breakneck Ridge and Limon. On Christmas Day elements of the 77th Division seized the port

of Palompon, sealing off the only important evacuation point available to the Japanese in northwestern Leyte.

A major portion of the Japanese forces remaining alive on Leyte was now trapped in the northwestern arm of the roughly L-shaped island. Available to the cornered enemy troops was a generally hilly area west of Ormoc Valley measuring some forty-nine miles in length from the northwestern tip of Leyte south to the western end of Ormoc Bay. With Palompon now under United States control the Japanese could only evacuate troops from a number of lesser coastal *barrios*, or towns.

On December 26, under instructions from General MacArthur's command post, control of operations passed from Sixth Army to Eighth Army, commanded by Lt. Gen. Robert L. Eichelberger. Cognizant of the fact that escaping Japanese might again fight against U.S. troops elsewhere in the Philippines, the Eighth Army commander ordered that mopping-up operations now already in progress be continued by all units in the field. The dull, unheralded task was carried on through the remaining days of December and well into January without rest. Many additional Japanese were killed and captured by the aggressive combat patrols now operating under Eighth Army's banner.

The morning of January 21, 1945, found the first echelon of the Americal Division—the 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team—steaming into Philippine waters for assignment to Eighth Army. General Eichelberger would now have fresh troops, seasoned in combat on Bougainville, with which to continue the thankless, forgotten mission of locating and destroying elements of the once-potent Japanese forces on Leyte.

Passing on orders from the headquarters of X Corps, to which the Americal Division was now attached, Maj. Gen. William H. Arnold, the Division Commander, ordered the 164th Infantry RCT into action on January 27, 1945. A X Corps field order assigned to the Americal the mission of relieving units of XXIV Corps on tactical missions on Leyte northwest of a line from Jaro through Valencia to Palompon and of conducting extensive mopping-up operations throughout the area.

On January 27, therefore, the work had been passed to the 164th Infantry, the direct-support 245th Field Artillery, Company A of the 121st Medical Battalion and to detachments of other service units of the Division under attachment to the 164th. By the same evening the combat team's first field order had been issued and the initial plans were now complete.

Early on the following morning the 1st Battalion of the 164th

entrucked at the Division base camp near Capoocan and moved south on Highway No. 2. By mid-afternoon the battalion had traversed the narrow, muddy highway over Breakneck Ridge and had reached Valencia. Relief of units of XXIV Corps on perimeter defense positions around the *barrio* began almost immediately.

The first elements of the 245th Field Artillery arrived in Valencia on January 30 and by the evening of the following day all howitzers had completed registrations on check points in a wide target area. Two Cubs, air eyes of the combat team, had flown to Valencia on January 30 and were now based on a 4,000-foot airstrip built by the Japanese just east of the *barrio*.

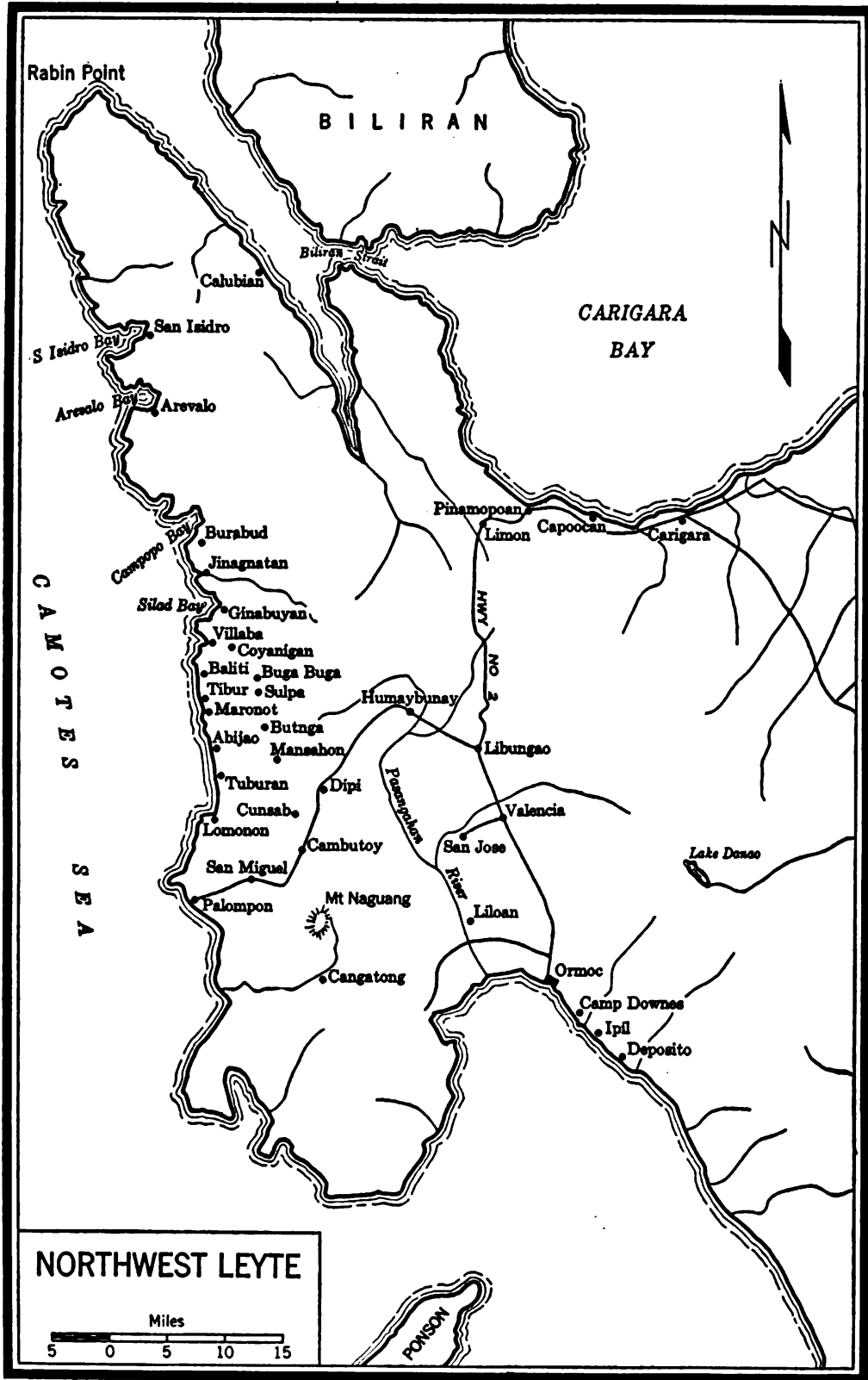
Shortly after dark on January 31 Company C of the 164th scored the first kills of the operations when three Japanese were slain as they approached the perimeter. The enemy group, unarmed and in poor physical condition, was apparently attempting to move to the western shores of the island to join the bulk of the Japanese awaiting evacuation to other islands.

Moving from Capoocan by truck on February 1, the 164th's 3d Battalion passed through Valencia later in the day and moved on to Ormoc. From the port city the battalion was under orders to move by water to Palompon to relieve troops of the 77th Division. On the following day, however, under instructions from General Arnold, the entire battalion was withdrawn to Valencia. New orders indicated that only one reinforced company from the 3d Battalion was to be sent to Palompon and that the movement to the tiny port was to be made by truck.

After the arrival of the 164th Infantry's Headquarters and Antitank Companies in Valencia on February 1, the regimental command post officially opened in a frame building on the edge of the *barrio*. By the evening of February 2 all active elements of the combat team were to be found in Valencia, with the newly arrived 2d Battalion in regimental reserve.

During the first two days in February patrols from the 1st Battalion combed the hills to the east of Valencia, encountering many small groups of stragglers. In these first patrol contacts twenty-four enemy were reported killed.

The zone of action of the 164th Infantry, according to intelligence estimates prepared at X Corps and Eighth Army headquarters, was now thought to hold more than three thousand Japanese, survivors of the many enemy units hurled into the Leyte campaign during the closing months of 1944. Gradually regrouping themselves and their weapons



for protection against American patrols, the Japanese were known to be gathering in two areas in the hope of eventually being evacuated to Cebu or other islands in the central Philippines.

In the hills around Mount Naguang, some ten thousand yards east of Palompon, an ever-increasing number of enemy was gathering after night marches from the east and northeast. That this had been previously designated an assembly area was borne out by statements of prisoners of war and by information contained in captured documents. In early February it was difficult for Americal Division intelligence officers to estimate the actual enemy strength in this area, but it was certain that a thousand Japanese could be found among the hills around Mount Naguang.

Further to the north another large group of enemy was forming to await evacuation. This force, thought to be at a strength of about 1,500, had set up a series of strong defensive positions on commanding ground around Abijao, Butnga, Sulpa, Bugabuga and Baliti. Evacuation of this group, either in parts or as a whole, would most probably be attempted through the small coastal *barrios* of Abijao or Baliti.

In addition to these two large groups other small bands of Japanese were now being found throughout the Division's zone of action. At best only poorly armed and inadequately fed, these aimlessly wandering enemy, bewildered by the recent decimation of their parent units, were no match for the aggressive patrols operating out of the Americal's advanced base camp at Valencia.

Moving into Ormoc Valley, the jungle-wise men of the Americal found that the terrain over which they were now to operate was vastly different from that of Guadalcanal or Bougainville. Completely missing was the blanketing mat of tall, heavily foliated trees and ever-present low, dense underbrush. Throughout the Valencia area lay a broad plain dotted with coconut palms and with many crude, flimsy huts in which the Filipinos lived. Alongside the highways and trails were countless mud holes in which there wallowed equally countless carabaos, native beasts of burden.

To the west of Valencia, along Leyte's northwest coast, a rugged chain of hills and mountains thrust themselves up from the fringes of the Ormoc-Valencia valley. It was among these hills, varying in size and character from gently sloped, grassy knolls to steep-sided, rock-filled mountains, that the Japanese had established their strongest positions.

Now fully aware of the situation with respect to the enemy and the terrain, Col. William J. Mahoney, commander of the 164th Infantry,

undertook the first in a series of movements designed to rid the regional zone of action of the remaining Japanese. In accordance with previously issued instructions from Division headquarters, he ordered Company I, reinforced, to Palompon by truck to relieve elements of the 77th Division at this coastal town.

On the morning of February 3, Company I, with its attached troops, entrucked at Valencia moved north to Libungao, with elements of the 21st Reconnaissance Troop along as a security force. Turning west, the truck convoy sped to Humaybunay, at which point the bumpy highway turned southwest toward Palompon. At 1530 the reinforced company detrucked in Palompon after a routine trip and commenced the immediate relief of the 77th Division troops.

The remainder of the 3d Battalion, on February 4, moved to Ormoc once again to prepare for a shore-to-shore movement to Villaba, on the northwest coast eight thousand yards north of Abijao. The transfer of this force to the coastal *barrio* would now place pressure on the Japanese in the Abijao-Baliti sector, denying them freedom of movement to the north in the event that pressure from the south should force an enemy evacuation of presently held positions.

The 3d Battalion's Company K set out to lead the battalion into Villaba, arriving at the *barrio's* tiny dock at 1700 on February 4. Japanese machine-gun fire greeted the infantrymen on the pier as unloading operations were beginning. Quick counteraction on the part of elements of Company K resulted in the capture of a hill northeast of the town as the remainder of the company moved through the streets to secure the town before dark.

During the night the Japanese made a bold attempt to drive the company back into the sea. An estimated platoon of enemy hurled themselves at the company perimeter in the darkness, but the drive was beaten back before any successes could be scored. On the following morning twenty-six enemy dead were found around Company K's new positions.

On February 6 the command post of the 164th Infantry's 3d Battalion opened in Villaba and on the next day Company L arrived to increase the town's garrison to its planned strength.

Meanwhile, under Division control, the 21st Reconnaissance Troop moved its base camp from the Capoocan area to Dipi, six miles northeast of Palompon. From this point a series of combat patrols scoured the length of the Dipi-Palompon road in an effort to keep the supply route open to Company I at the coast. Armored vehicles covered the road as it

wound through the rugged hills northeast of Palompon while patrols on foot moved along both sides of the route.

Up to the evening of February 7, patrols from the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 164th, operating out of Valencia, added thirty-two more enemy dead to those already killed and brought in a quota of prisoners. Four additional enemy were killed on the night of February 7 as they stumbled into the fire of the 164th's machine guns.

By this time the entire sector was now under the control of the Americal Division as combat operations were being stepped up. The 3d Battalion of the 77th Division's 307th Infantry had turned over the Valencia perimeter to the 164th Infantry's Antitank and Cannon Companies while Company I was completing the relief of the 77th's 305th Infantry in and around Palompon.

To start a new phase of the extended mopping-up operations, the North Dakotans' 1st Battalion moved by truck from Valencia to Dipi on February 8. With the coastal *barrio* of Abijao as the objective, the battalion was to open a westward drive from Dipi with a series of long-range patrols. Every known enemy strongpoint along the route of advance was to be attacked and destroyed with as little delay as possible.

At the same time, under similar orders, the 2d Battalion established a new base camp at Soong, six miles generally west of Palompon. Before beginning a northwestward advance in the general direction of San Miguel and Cambutoy, both just south of the Dipi-Palompon road, the Soong-Cangatong area was to be thoroughly scouted for possible enemy bivouacs and strongpoints.

Operating now to the south of the 2d Battalion was the 3d Battalion, 182d Infantry. The mission of this battalion, under Division guidance, was to clean out the sector south of Soong and Cangatong and west of Ormoc Bay. Scattered insignificant contacts were reported by the Bay Staters patrolling the area in the days ahead. Other 182d Infantry patrols were dispatched to the Camotes Islands, between Ormoc Bay and Camotes Sea, most of which returned with negative reports.

In support of the 164th Infantry operations now taking shape, the 245th Field Artillery scattered its three firing batteries to each of the battalion sectors. On February 8 Battery B was sent by landing craft to join the 3d Battalion in Villaba, Battery A displaced to positions in Dipi to support the 1st Battalion, while Battery C moved to Liloan to support activities of the 2d Battalion.

Meanwhile, on February 9, in order to allow for a more efficient tactical employment of troops within the zone of action, the Commanding

General of the Americal released the 21st Reconnaissance Troop to the control of the commander of the 164th. The change in control of the troop resulted in no alteration of the unit's patrol missions along the Dipi-Palompon road.

Two days later additional combat strength was made available to the combat team as the 2d and 3d Battalions, 96th Infantry, Philippine Army, were attached to the 164th. These Filipinos, seasoned as guerrillas during the Japanese occupation of Leyte, were now to be employed as well organized combat troops in the vigorous mopping-up campaign ahead.

Operations of all three battalions began in earnest on February 12 as the 1st and 2d Battalions began sweeping their sectors and the 3d Battalion dispatched more intensive patrols outside Villaba. Impressive gains were quickly recorded as the 1st and 2d Battalions, by the evening of the following day, ground out average advances of five thousand yards. Company E hurried into Cambutoy to take one of its battalion's twin objectives. In sharp clashes throughout the entire zone up to the evening of February 14, a total of 288 Japanese killed was reported. Two prisoners were brought in for questioning.

An eighteen-man patrol from the 2d Battalion, searching the Mount Naguang area on February 12, ran into a group of enemy shortly after it had split at the fork of a trail. While searching the body of a dead enemy soldier one of the men was wounded and isolated when Japanese fire increased in the immediate vicinity. The entire group was reassembled, at which time it was decided to attempt a flanking movement to the rear of the enemy and the wounded American. Upon hearing sudden and intense rifle fire and the explosion of a number of grenades, the main body of the patrol joined the smaller flanking party and found Staff Sgt. Malcolm K. Walsh, of Jamestown, North Dakota, blocking the enemy escape route. The bodies of thirteen Japanese soldiers were lying a short distance to his front.

It turned out that Walsh had entered the ravine at one end as he heard the enemy enter it at the other. He deployed his three men to guard his rear and flanks and waited until the Japanese were almost upon him. His sudden barrage startled the enemy, confused them and allowed the sergeant to run up his impressive score. While a litter was being made for the wounded soldier whose rescue was now made possible, the ever-alert infantryman spotted a Japanese officer hiding a short distance away. Walsh sent him off to join his men with one well aimed shot.

On February 14 protection of the port of Palompon was turned over to the 21st Reconnaissance Troop in order to allow Company I to rejoin the remainder of the 3d Battalion in Villaba. While en route to the coast a half-track from the 21st struck an enemy land mine one and a half miles west of Dipi. The resulting blast destroyed the vehicle, killed one officer and wounded five men. This incident marred an otherwise quiet displacement to Palompon.

Reports received the following evening indicated that the 1st and 2d Battalion of the 164th had scored more impressive victories during the day. Killing twenty-nine enemy as they moved west over the hills, advance elements of the 1st Battalion reached Butnga late in the afternoon of February 15 to prepare a bivouac for the remainder of the Battalion. Meanwhile, the 2d Battalion pushed into San Miguel, the second objective taken, after slaying thirty-eight Japanese in scattered fire fights.

Through February 15, in large- and small-scale actions in all parts of the regimental zone of action, troops of the combat team had now killed 577 Japanese, had reported a half dozen more as definitely wounded and had captured eleven prisoners. This had all been accomplished at a cost of but six per cent of the number of casualties inflicted on the enemy.

While supervising the interrogation of prisoners at Valencia during this time, Capt. James Fogg, the Division language officer, was startled to hear one Japanese officer speak to him in English and call him by name. Excited questioning brought to light the fact that the two had met before the war at the University of California where both had been students.

Because of the fact that the 164th's three battalions were now operating far from regimental headquarters, it was decided to establish an advanced command post closer to the scenes of action. Consequently, by mid-afternoon on February 16 a combat command post was opened in Palompon, allowing for closer supervision of the movements of the troops.

To the new advanced command post now went the 121st Medical Battalion's Company A and a portable surgical unit composed of two surgeons and thirteen enlisted technicians. Speedy, life-saving medical care was now closer to the men who might, in the days to come, be sorely in need of it. Back in Valencia, a detachment from the 58th Evacuation Hospital took over rear-area care and evacuation of the combat casualties now to be treated close to the advancing lines.

On the morning of February 16 Companies A and B of the 1st Battalion struck westward down the Pasangahan River valley toward Abijao, the battalion objective. At 1400, after having encountered and overcome small pockets of resistance, the two companies moved quietly into Abijao as the remaining units of the battalion followed close behind. In the *barrio*, ringed with rugged hills, patrols from the companies found twenty-five enemy dead apparently killed by heavy concentrations of artillery and mortar fire laid on the area prior to the securing of the town. During the day's advance sixty-seven other Japanese were reported killed in the scattered contacts.

Meanwhile, the 2d Battalion was grinding out an advance of more than four thousand yards in some parts of its sector as its three rifle companies struck north of the Dipi-Palompon road, up into the steep, grassy hills. By dusk, after twenty-two enemy had been killed, the forward elements were to be found spread in unit bivouacs from Lomonon on the west to Cunsab on the east.

Attacking in the wake of a battery concentration laid down by the 245th Field Artillery's Battery B, troops of the 3d Battalion, on February 16, failed to break through dogged enemy resistance in strong positions overlooking Villaba from the northeast. After repeated attempts to pierce the Japanese defenses were turned back during the day, Company L withdrew to report having killed only four of the defenders.

Troops of the 164th's 1st Battalion were on hand to witness the first evacuation of a Division casualty by helicopter on the afternoon of February 16, shortly after the arrival of troops in Abijao. A seriously wounded enlisted man, in need of immediate medical attention, was carried into Abijao while the helicopter, called for when the man's condition was first diagnosed, was winging its way toward the *barrio*. Had it not been for this strange-looking aircraft, now new to the Pacific, the wounded man's evacuation might well have been a painful, time-consuming task which would have greatly lessened his chances for survival.

As the 1st and 2d Battalions outdistanced sorely needed supplies, the Division Artillery "air force" was pressed into service to deliver odd items of equipment to isolated units. Medical supplies received first call; blanket-wrapped bottles of blood plasma were often to be found in the Cubs operating from the Valencia air base. Radio batteries were dropped at intervals to infantry and artillery parties in an effort to maintain communications with higher headquarters. On February 16, while attempting to drop batteries to an artillery liaison party with the

164th Infantry's 1st Battalion near Abijao, one L-4 crashed into the wooded valley east of the *barrio*, injuring the pilot and the observer.

Between February 17 and the evening of February 19, 161 more Japanese were killed as attacks of the 164th Infantry continued throughout the sector. Out of Abijao the 1st Battalion operated patrols to the east, the northeast and the north, driving as far in the latter direction as the *barrio* of Maranot, a short distance up from the battalion perimeter. Meanwhile, the 2d Battalion, in its drive up from the Dipi-Palompon road toward Abijao, was halted by increasingly strong Japanese resistance. Near Villaba, the 3d Battalion again failed to reduce strong enemy positions to the northeast, but one reinforced platoon from Company K scored an outstanding victory when it overran an enemy strongpoint 1,500 yards southeast of the town and killed thirty-seven Japanese without suffering a single casualty.

During the period a ninety-man patrol from the 21st Reconnaissance Troop moved north from Palompon with instructions to sweep the coast as far north as Abijao. Arriving at the 1st Battalion's lines in Abijao late in the afternoon of February 18, the group reported having killed eleven Japanese in a relatively quiet sweep up the shore line.

Fresh Americal Division troops were now entering the picture as General Arnold ordered the operations expanded. Col. Floyd E. Dunn, commander of the 182d Infantry, sent his 2d and 3d Battalions to assembly areas near Humaybunay to prepare for action. In addition, Col. Claude M. McQuarrie, the 132d Infantry's commanding officer, dispatched his 2d Battalion to western Leyte to take part in the new, all-out drive against the Japanese.

Although Col. William J. Mahoney, commander of the North Dakotans, had been in control of all units in action within the 164th's zone of action, the operations, in general, were being carried under the direct supervision of General Arnold and his G-3, Lt. Col. Samuel E. Gee. From the Capocan area the Commanding General maintained a close check on late developments through frequent visits and through detailed daily reports of activities.

In early February, however, wire and radio communications between the Division command post and that of the 164th Infantry became increasingly difficult to maintain. Accordingly, General Arnold ordered an advanced command post opened in Valencia as a means of controlling the operations. To this advanced headquarters he sent his Assistant Division Commander, Brig. Gen. Eugene W. Ridings, to take over responsibility for major tactical decisions. The Commanding General's

continued visits to the command post kept him from becoming a stranger to the progress of the Americal's "private war" with the Japanese.

On February 18, after staging through the deserted village of Humaybunay, the 2d Battalion, 182d Infantry, began a westward movement along a route north of an extension of the Palompon-Dipi road. On the next morning the Bay Staters' 3d Battalion followed from Humaybunay to take up positions on the right of the 2d Battalion.

Operating with the 182d now were a pair of Filipino battalions, the 2d Battalion of the 95th Infantry and the 3d Battalion of the 96th. In compliance with instructions from Division headquarters, these units were placed on the regimental right flank with orders to protect it from encirclement by the still-crafty Japanese.

Meanwhile, the 2d Battalion of the 132d Infantry was marching into the enlarged arena from another direction. After initial reconnaissance on February 15 had reported that such a move could be made satisfactorily, Company G landed at Calubian, on Carigara Bay, fifteen miles northwest of Pinamopoan, following a short trip by landing craft.

Moving out from Pinamopoan in the wake of Company G, Company E swung up around the tip of Leyte and came ashore at San Isidro, eleven miles south of the upper end of the island. In the meantime, Company G had begun a march across the hills from Calubian to San Isidro. In its trip around to San Isidro Company F halted overnight at Calubian and then proceeded on around to join Company E on the morning of February 18.

By 1000 on February 18 the entire 2d Battalion, less Company H, had reached San Isidro and an hour and a half later moved to Arevalo, six thousand yards to the south. At 1450, less than an hour after the force arrived in Arevalo, Company H joined the battalion following a swing around the tip of the island from Pinamopoan. The following evening found the advance elements of the battalion in contact with small groups of Japanese near Burabud, some eight thousand yards north of Villaba, the battalion's ultimate goal.

The plan of action of the Americal Division troops in western Leyte was now apparent. Driving up from the south, the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 164th Infantry, eventually to join in Abijao, were to roll the Japanese northward ahead of them in the direction of Villaba. In the meantime, exerting pressure from the east, the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 182d, with the Filipino units attached, were to keep the Japanese from spilling out in that direction. In the north, the 3d Battalion of the

164th and the 2d Battalion of the 132d were to add pressure on the enemy forces from that sector.

The planned joining of all forces driving against the enemy would result in a tight ring being formed and complete annihilation, it was hoped, would soon follow. However, bitter fighting by determined Japanese die-hards was soon to place a great many hardships before these veterans of Guadalcanal and Bougainville. The well laid plans were not destined for completion.

Since no additional artillery was now sent to the area, save for that supplied by the 164th Infantry's Cannon Company, direct support for all six infantry battalions fell to the 245th Field Artillery. Because of the burden placed on the personnel of the battalion, however, Division Artillery's other three battalions lent several groups of officers and men to the 245th for duty as liaison and forward observer groups. Once all parties were sent into action with the supported battalions, the 245th's radio channels became jammed with transmissions from a total of twenty-four liaison and forward observer sections.

On February 20 the 2d Battalion, 164th Infantry, broke out with a significant 2,000-yard advance before noon before running into determined resistance one thousand yards north of the tiny *barrio* of Mansahon. For the remainder of the day an estimated company of Japanese beat back strong assaults by two companies of the 2d Battalion.

Meanwhile, other gains were recorded throughout the sector as the two battalions of the 182d Infantry, the 3d Battalion of the 164th and the 132d's 2d Battalions all pushed forward with increased vigor.

After moving out from Abijao before dawn on February 21, the 164th Infantry's 1st Battalion, at 0800, launched a northward drive from a line of departure centered 2,500 yards east of the *barrio*. Within two hours Companies A and B had been forced to halt in the face of strong enemy defenses north and northwest of Butnga. As Company C was moved in from battalion reserve, the entire force resumed a slow advance toward the Japanese positions. Late in the afternoon, however, after Company A had scored some impressive gains, the entire battalion was forced to withdraw under heavy Japanese machine gun and mortar fire from the front and both flanks. In the day's actions sixty-four Japanese were killed as the later-afternoon enemy retaliatory actions inflicted heavy casualties on the 1st Battalion.

In the Villaba sector Company K of the 164th became the target for an intense Japanese attack in a bivouac a thousand yards north of Baliti. Striking in the darkness at 0400 on the morning of February 21,

the enemy force of undetermined strength tried for more than an hour to break into the company perimeter. Finally, after seven Japanese had been killed, the attack was halted.

The northern portion of the ring around the Japanese began to close late this same afternoon when the 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry, made contact by radio with elements of the 182d's 3d Battalion. Shortly before dark the 164th Infantry succeeded in making visual contact with patrols of the 132d's 2d Battalion moving south from Burabud.

The actions of the 182d Infantry's 2d Battalion, during the latter hours of the afternoon of February 21, became closely connected with those of the 164th's 1st Battalion. At 1650 Companies E and G were hurried out over the open ground toward the hills east of Sulpa in an effort to relieve the enemy pressure now inflicting serious casualties on the North Dakotans. By nightfall the two companies reported having made contact with strong and well entrenched Japanese forces eight hundred yards east of Sulpa. Radio messages from the units indicated that no friendly troops were to be found in the area, for it was thought that contact might be made by this time. In the drive toward Sulpa, Companies E and G killed twenty-seven enemy, running the Americal Division score of dead Japanese on Leyte to 1,008 since January 31.

Meanwhile, Japanese forces moving down behind the 1st Battalion of the 164th with savage attacks eventually forced the battalion to abandon the perimeter around the line of departure and scurry back to safer ground in Abijao. Moving into the *barrio*, the 1st Battalion was greeted by Companies E and F of the regiment's 2d Battalion, troops of which had reached Abijao earlier in the afternoon.

On the morning of February 22 the two advance companies of the North Dakotans' 2d Battalion pushed north along the coast from Abijao with the intention of joining forces with elements of the 3d Battalion moving down Villaba. By the evening of February 24 forward elements of the 2d Battalion had been halted just south of Tibur, 3,500 yards above Abijao and had killed forty-three Japanese in the drive.

During this three-day period, elements of the Bay Staters' 2d Battalion patrolled the area to the east of Sulpa, adding at least fifty-two to the list of enemy dead. The regiment's 3d Battalion pushed efforts to gain physical contact with the 164th Infantry troops in and around Villaba as the 2d Battalion of the 132d Infantry struck hard against stern enemy opposition in its drive down from the north. Throughout the entire sector, in determined drives, attacks and patrol actions, 194 enemy were killed up to the night of February 24.

The morning of February 25 found the Illinois regiment's 2d Battalion striking south from a point four hundred yards below Gina-buyani, with commanding ground held by the Japanese just east of Silad as the day's target. Company F and Company E, on the left and right, respectively, were turned back in early attempts to drive the strong Japanese force from the hill. Late in the afternoon, Company G was committed with orders to envelop the hill from the east. By 1800, only after repeatedly determined assaults, the crest of the hill was safe in the hands of the 132d. A count of the enemy dead showed that 205 Japanese had been slain in the drive; the battalion now found itself a thousand yards east of Silad and some two thousand yards northeast of Villaba.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion, 164th Infantry, had initiated a new drive eastward out of Abijao designed to clear Japanese from key hills east and southeast of the *barrio*. By evening of February 25, after two days of action, some gains had been recorded and at least ten enemy were reported killed.

By the end of February, after a rash of heavy fighting had broken out in all corners of the Americal Division's sector, the top of the pocket around the Japanese had been closed. Contact was made between elements of the 132d and 182d and between 132d Infantry riflemen and troops of the North Dakotans' 3d Battalion. Along the coast the 2d Battalion, 164th Infantry, had recorded gains of more than five hundred yards in its drive toward Villaba, while the regiment's 1st Battalion reported being in position six thousand yards east of Abijao. Another 93 Japanese had been killed before February's last daylight hours faded away.

One of the many hills taken during February's closing days fell to the Americal Division principally through the efforts of Staff Sgt. Lyle V. Stepleton of Pomona, California. As his platoon moved up an enemy-held height, Stepleton and six men provided security for the flank. When he discovered a Japanese machine gun in a position from which its crew could menace the safety of the entire platoon, the Sergeant acted quickly. He crawled over open terrain to within three feet of the position, shot the gunner, killed the assistant gunner with a hand grenade, leaped into the emplacement and disabled the weapon. Then with the aid of two other men Stepleton disposed of eight other Japanese riflemen, secured the hill and thereby accomplished, almost single-handedly, the mission assigned the entire platoon.

Enemy harassing of newly won positions of the 164th's Company E

to the east of Tibur broke into a full-scale attack at 2030 on February 28. Under a hail of supporting heavy-weapons fire, an estimated company of Japanese stormed up the slopes of the hill on which the company occupied defenses. The determination of the infantrymen, coupled with effective close-in artillery and mortar barrages, forced the Japanese to withdraw into the night.

Again at 0310 on March 1, however, the remnants of the assault force worked their way back up the hill to try a second attack. As had happened before, the tenacity of the North Dakotans and the efficient work of the cannoneers and the mortar crew men beat the new thrust back down the slopes. During this second attack, however, the enemy pressure increased to such alarming proportions that three of the company's positions had to be abandoned in order to form a more tightly knit perimeter.

Individual acts of valor were recorded in numbers during the night as Company E struggled to hold the hill, but that of Pfc. John L. McInnis, of Bossier City, Louisiana, ranks at or near the top. McInnis, a member of a 245th Field Artillery forward observer party working with the company, occupied a position on the perimeter as the first hostile attack was unleashed. Although painfully wounded by enemy hand-grenade fragments in the early moments of the attack he quickly replaced a slain automatic rifleman, deliberately exposed himself on top of his post and sprayed a rain of bullets along the slope up which the Japanese were making their assault. After he had emptied his rifle he dropped into his foxhole and reloaded the weapon with one hand while he lobbed grenades down the hill with the other. He then stubbornly resumed his exposed position and once again poured a volume of heavy fire on the enemy, holding his post until the attack was repulsed. Wounded and unable to walk, McInnis crawled to the foot of the hill, submitted to medical treatment and then returned to his post before the medical personnel could evacuate him. During the second attack the intrepid artilleryman displayed the same courage, despite his wounds, and aided materially, by his inspirational presence and his continuous devotion to duty, in turning back the strong and determined Japanese attacks. By standing in the open during the night's melee McInnis not only risked further injury or possible death from the accurate enemy fire but from the friendly artillery and mortar fire falling extremely close to the company's positions. Only when dawn came and when the hill was known to be secure did McInnis allow himself to be evacuated for addi-

tional medical treatment. When notified of his award of the Distinguished Service Cross for his deeds, McInnis is reported to have asked: "That means I get two bucks more a month, doesn't it?"

Early morning patrols from Company E quickly secured the abandoned positions. Five enemy dead were found in the area, plus evidence that many more had been killed or wounded. In the late afternoon of March 1 troops of the company killed nine more Japanese as minor mopping-up operations were carried out.

On February 24 control of operations of the Americal Division on Leyte passed from Eighth Army to Eighth Army Area Command. Originally assigned missions for the Division were carried over under the new headquarters without alteration. Operations in the field continued without abatement.

Two days later, in order to control more efficiently operations of its units, the 182d Infantry moved its command post by truck and landing craft to Villaba. Tactical control of all units in the Villaba sector now passed to the 182d.

During the first four days in March the 1st Battalion, 164th Infantry, pushed hard against a virtually impregnable Japanese fortress built into the crater atop a steep-sided, rocky hill. In a continued series of assaults day after day, the companies of the battalion inched their way up the wall-like slopes, running up a score of more than fifty-four enemy dead. Small-scale counterattacks took shape often, forcing the units to halt and beat them back. By the evening of March 4, with the aid of flamethrowers, forward elements of the battalion had crept to within a mere fifteen feet of the crater from which a terrible stench of death arose.

On March 5, realizing that the battalion could not hope for success in the attacks against the crater-topped hill, General Ridings, although cognizant of the gains already made, ordered the 164th's 1st Battalion to break contact with the Japanese and prepare to move north to take up positions on the right of the regiment's 2d Battalion. It was now thought that a two-battalion sweep northward toward Baliti would account for far more enemy at far less cost than would a continued pounding of the strong enemy fortress east of Abijao.

Meanwhile, the North Dakotans' 2d Battalion had, in a series of assaults, swept past Tibur and had moved into a group of hills overlooking Baliti Valley. On March 5 a patrol from Company F, operating a short distance north of the battalion line, found twenty Japanese dead following a heavy concentration of 81mm mortar fire in the area. Nearly a hundred

other enemy had been slain by the riflemen of the 2d Battalion as the steady drive brought the battalion to the rim of the valley.

During this period coordinated attacks by units of the 132d and 182d Infantry Regiments ground out gains of more than a thousand yards in a determined advance through hills and paddies below Coyanigan. On March 2, after a series of setbacks handed them by fanatically resisting Japanese, Company E of the 182d finally captured a hill which, in a subsequent investigation, turned out to have been a key enemy command post. A number of foot lockers jammed full with papers and documents was found, together with quantities of equipment and supplies. In the four-day attacks, the Bay State and Illinois infantrymen added 105 more Japanese to the list of dead.

Shortly before dawn on March 6 a lone enemy plane, roaring in over Palompon from the west, bombed and strafed the port. After killing two civilians and wounding a score of others, the plane disappeared as quickly as it had come. The surprise raid, however, caused no damage to Americal Division equipment and no casualties were reported among the troops in the town.

Moving out from the Abijao area at 0430 on March 6, Company A of the 164th moved north through a defile and soon reported the capture of a hill mass a thousand yards east of Tibur. Company B followed later in the morning and struck at positions five hundred yards east of the Company A positions. Increasingly stubborn enemy resistance halted the advance of Company B and eventually, in the evening, forced withdrawal to a night perimeter three hundred yards to the south of the objective.

In the sector of the North Dakotans' 3d Battalion, Company I continued with a southward push begun several days before. Killing fourteen Japanese as they ground out new yardage, men of the company pushed through Baliti and moved four hundred yards south of the *barrio* before darkness halted the advance. Less than a thousand yards now separated Company I from a juncture with advance elements of the 2d Battalion.

At this same time, in an area slightly more than two thousand yards southeast of Villaba, Company G of the 132d Infantry opened its day's activities with an assault on strong Japanese emplacements to its front. By 1830 on March 6, after a bitter, all-day fight, the positions were overrun and a tally of twenty-eight enemy dead was recorded.

In the Baliti Valley area troops of both the 2d and 3d Battalions of

the 164th Infantry drove forward on the morning of March 7 in attempts to break through the enemy lines and make contact with one another. Moderate to heavy resistance held the 2d Battalion to limited gains during the day while Companies I and L, across the way to the north, were slugging their way over nearly four hundred yards of territory. Riflemen of the 2d Battalion accounted for eleven enemy fatalities as the two companies of the 3d Battalion killed fifty-nine in the day's actions. Nightfall found Company I in bivouac some five hundred yards away from the lines of the 2d Battalion's Company F.

Striking generally southward on the morning of March 7, units of the 3d Battalion, 182d Infantry, reported early gains of up to three hundred yards. Orders were now received from Division headquarters to turn the drive to the southwest to pinch out the 2d Battalion of the 132d which now stood between the Bay Staters and the 164th's 3d Battalion.

By 1500 the pinch-out had been completed and the 132d's 2d Battalion moved northwest to Villaba to await transportation by water to Pinamopoan. Meanwhile, the troops of the 182d continued with the drive south and by dark reported fifteen enemy dead.

On the following morning Company I of the 164th, in renewing the drive toward the 2d Battalion to the south, ran into strong resistance immediately to its front. The full power of the company quickly forced a penetration of the Japanese positions near the beach as twenty-four enemy were slain and one was taken prisoner. Company L, to the east, overran a number of weakly held positions and killed ten Japanese. Meanwhile, in a relatively quiet morning's advance, troops of the 2d Battalion added nine more to the regiment's total for the day.

At 1130 the twin drive in the coastal sector reached its climax when Companies F and I made contact nine hundred yards south of Baliti. Six hours later Companies G and L joined forces in the hills to the east. The entire coastal area from Palompon north to Silad had now been swept clear of all pockets of organized Japanese resistance. There seemed to be no way now for the enemy to slip troops out of Leyte.

Abrupt changes in the tactical situation came about on March 9 as a result of new orders from Maj. Gen. Richard Donovan, commanding general of Eighth Army Area Command. The 1st and 2d Battalions of the 164th Infantry were recalled to Abijao to await redeployment in the sector. At the same time, the North Dakotans' 3d Battalion was withdrawn to Villaba to relieve units of the 182d Infantry and to continue with mopping-up operations to the north, east and south. All troops of the

182d were relieved of further combat assignments and were instructed to return to the Capoocan area.

On March 10 the 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team was released from the control of the Commanding General, Americal Division, and was placed under the commanding general, Eighth Army Area Command. The mission now assigned the combat team was that of continuing with offensive missions in western Leyte as well as that of protecting installations in the Ormoc-Valencia sector. In addition, by 1600, March 24 the combat team was to be prepared for a shore-to-shore movement in support of new operations elsewhere in the Philippines under the direct control of the commanding general, Eighth Army.

Two days later the 164th Infantry was directed to arrange for the transfer of elements of the 108th Infantry Regimental Combat Team of the 40th Infantry Division, to the Palompon-Villaba area by water no later than March 23. Following this move which would result in the assumption of all tactical assignments by the 108th, all units of the 164th Infantry and attached units were to be assembled in the Ormoc area for the impending movement under Eighth Army control.

On March 20, toward the close of the campaign on Leyte, Pfc. Albert D. Rojo, of Tampa, Florida, quickly racked up an impressive score of enemy dead on a routine patrol. As first scout for his squad, Rojo was moving across an open field when he spotted a Japanese sniper who was about to open fire on him. Dropping hastily to the ground the scout drew a bead on the enemy soldier and killed him with one well laid shot. He continued his advance immediately after this and was subsequently fired on by six more enemy. Firing as he advanced, Rojo disregarded the heavy enemy fire being directed at him, and eventually succeeded in disposing of the six additional Japanese. The rest of his squad could only follow along in amazement.

The 164th Infantry's Antitank Company, on March 13, was released from the control of the regiment and dispatched to the Division base camp at Capoocan under direct control of Americal Division headquarters.

Between February 21 and March 18 the gun sections of the North Dakotans' Cannon Company had taken an active part in support of the regiment's operations. During this time one platoon was attached to the 245th Field Artillery units in position at Dipi, while the remaining M7s were attached to other units of the 245th at Villaba. By March 3 one of the two M7s at Villaba had been moved to Abijao to offer closer support

to troops of the 164th's 1st Battalion driving into the hills to the east. On March 18 the last Cannon Company gun section was relieved of attachment to the 245th Field Artillery after the company as a unit had fired more than two thousand rounds in less than a month.

Attached to the 245th since February 4, Battery A of the 221st Field Artillery was released at Dipi on March 12 to return to Capoocan to rejoin its parent battalion. In six weeks of almost continuous action the battery had fired 2,744 rounds of 155mm ammunition and by its rapid, accurate fire had contributed greatly to the successes scored in the operations.

Its direct support mission on Leyte all but completed, the 245th Field Artillery began relieving its firing batteries on March 18 when Battery C moved from Villaba by water to establish a bivouac at Ipil, three miles south of Ormoc. Two days later Battery B departed from Villaba and joined Battery C at Ipil. Battery A entrucked at Dipi on March 23, moved around through Valencia and closed at Ipil late the same afternoon. On March 21 the 245th's advanced command post at Dipi was closed as its activities were transferred back to the main command post at Valencia. In support of the actions of the equivalent of more than two full infantry regiments, the battalion had fired 12,165 rounds of 105mm ammunition from its widely separated positions.

During operations in northwestern Leyte units of the Americal Division killed an estimated 3,500 Japanese and captured 68 others. The operations in the field at times confused those who attempted to follow the units' progress on situation maps. Battalions were often reported attacking in many different directions throughout the sector. This, however, was necessary in order to overcome the many large and small pockets of resistance discovered. These peculiar tactics during the period resulted in the death of more Japanese than were thought to have been in the area early February.

By midnight on March 23 the 108th Regimental Combat Team had completed the relief of the 164th Infantry in northwestern Leyte. In its final operations in the Villaba sector before the relief, the 3d Battalion of the 164th killed an additional forty-eight Japanese in scattered moderate to strong patrol clashes.

As the relief was being completed, the 164th Infantry set up bivouacs for the 2d and 3d Battalions at Camp Downs, an old peacetime military post located on high ground a short distance south of Ormoc. Late in the afternoon of March 24 the combat team reported by radio

to Eighth Army Area Command headquarters that it was now ready to move from the island on call.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the Americal Division was busily engaged in last-minute preparations for a new operation, one which was to bring new fame to the Division. In the days not far ahead, the officers and men of the 164th were to learn more of the new campaign in which they were destined to take part.

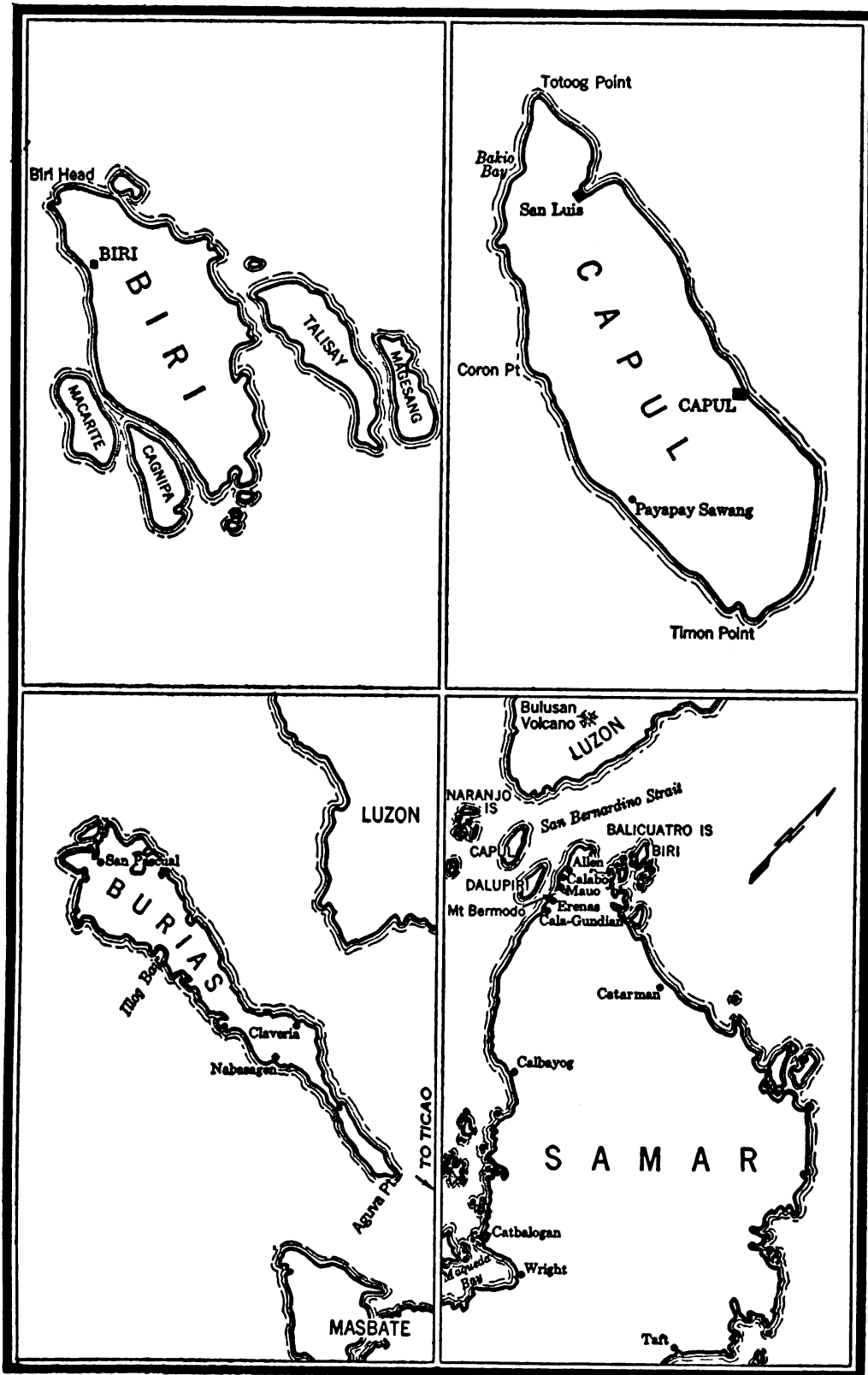
The Straits

ONCE THE BEACHHEADS HAD BEEN FIRMLY ESTABLISHED ON THE shores of Leyte after October 20, 1944, Sixth Army's corps turned a share of their attention to the larger island of Samar, to the northeast of Leyte. Samar, third largest island in the Philippines and northernmost in the group of subordinate islands known as the Visayas, was the first island seen by Ferdinand Magellan upon entering the archipelago in 1521. The land mass comprises such forbidding terrain that it soon became apparent that Samar would be of no great strategic importance to either the Japanese or the Americans. The island's road net, although impressive in its total number of miles of highways, was such that one could often travel faster from point to point along the irregular coast line by boat.

Nevertheless, under the general Sixth Army plan, provisions were made for relatively small-scale operations designed to clear the southern half of Samar of all organized enemy resistance. There operations would also result in securing San Juanico Strait, the narrow passage separating Leyte and Samar, and would protect the flank of Sixth Army's lines on Leyte itself.

On October 24, 1944, at the climax of a thrust up the Leyte side of San Juanico Strait, units of the 1st Cavalry Division's 8th Cavalry Regiment moved across to Samar to land unopposed at La Paz, eleven miles north of Taclobán, Leyte's capital. Within three days the troopers had pushed a bridgehead across the Silaga River, two miles north of La Paz.

During the early days of November elements of the 7th Cavalry scoured the San Antonio sector, across the mouth of San Juanico Strait from Taclobán, with negative results. Meanwhile, advance elements of the 8th Cavalry ranged northward up Samar's west coast from the Silaga River in the face of scattered enemy resistance. On November 16, after having beaten back a heavy Japanese counterattack earlier in the



morning, the main body of the 8th Cavalry's 1st Squadron reached Calbiga, ten miles south of Wright.

On December 4 the squadron was instructed to secure Samar's central trans-island highway as rapidly as possible by taking Wright, its western terminus on Maqueda Bay. Movements in compliance with the orders started on the following morning.

Five days later, after heavy rains and floods and Japanese resistance had hampered progress, the juncture of Highways 1 and 2 was captured, placing the force a short distance east of the objective. On December 14 the first elements of the 8th Cavalry entered Wright only to find that the Japanese had fled.

Catbalogan, Samar's capital, now became the new squadron objective as a northward drive was launched along the west coast above Wright. At the halfway mark the advance was ground to a halt by tenacious Japanese resistance on the banks of the Magbag River. It was not until December 19 that the cavalymen were able to push through this series of strongpoints and resume the drive toward Catbalogan.

For all practical purposes, these operations, plus a series of patrols in the south, brought a close to the campaign in the southern half of the island. Guerrillas, assisting the 8th Cavalry, secured the remainder of the central highway as far east as Taft, on the east coast. After Catbalogan was taken without incident following the reduction of the Magbag River defenses, the regimental command post of the 8th Cavalry was set up in Samar's capital. Only scattered contacts were subsequently reported by 8th Cavalry patrols tracking down all evidences of enemy troops in the area.

By January 14, 1945, when XXIV Corps assumed control of all tactical operations on Samar, units of the 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry (96th Division), had completed the relief of all elements of the 8th Cavalry in Catbalogan. The 381st moved swiftly into action when a civilian reported that a hundred Japanese were on the move from Santa Margarita to Calbayog, far to the northwest of the capital.

After a hurried trip up the west coast in landing craft, troops of the 381st Infantry overcame a stubborn enemy machine-gun position and established a beachhead at Santa Margarita. Later, however, patrols reported that the bulk of the Japanese had already moved out toward Calbayog. A forthcoming relief of the 381st forced the postponement of a pursuit now being organized.

Field Order No. 25, issued at X Corps headquarters on January 26, directed that the Americal Division, the advance echelons of which had

only recently arrived on Leyte, would, in addition to its other tactical assignments,

“ . . . garrison Catbalogan, Samar, with one battalion, relieving elements of the XXIV Corps in that area by 0001H, 1 February 1945.”

By the evening of January 31 almost the entire 1st Battalion of the Americal's 182d Infantry had moved into Catbalogan and the major portion of the 381st Infantry's 3d Battalion was ready to move back to Leyte. It was not until February 8, however, that the last units of the 381st, which had moved north to Calbayog in pursuit of the Japanese, were relieved by Company C of the 182d.

Meanwhile, on January 31, the 182d Infantry's Antitank Company took over security detachments at the vital logging mills at Balangiga and Bulusao, in southern Samar. A dozen days later elements of the 1st Infantry (Philippine Army) relieved the Antitank Company, allowing it to return to Leyte.

On February 13 United States forces on Samar were gathered under the Headquarters (Provisional), United States Army Forces, Samar, as control of the island was turned over to Brig. Gen. LeCount H. Slocum, commander of Americal Division Artillery. By February 18, after additional strength had been sent to Samar, General Slocum had at his disposal these units of the Americal Division and the guerrilla forces on the island:

- 1st Battalion, 182d Infantry Regiment
- Platoon, Cannon Company, 182d Infantry Regiment
- Battery B, 246th Field Artillery Battalion
- Company B, 121st Medical Battalion
- Provisional Surgical Team, 121st Medical Battalion
- 17th Portable Surgical Hospital
- Detachment, 542d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment
- 1st Infantry Regiment, less 2d Battalion and Company A (Philippine Army)
- 93d Division (Philippine guerrilla forces)

On February 10, as the force was being gathered, General Slocum received instructions to be prepared to assume control of operations against the Japanese in northern Samar and on adjacent islands in San Bernardino Strait. Five days before this General MacArthur, in a letter discussing the course of the Luzon campaign, now nearing its climax,

stated a desire for a short, safe passage through the Visayas to Luzon. The clearing of northern Samar and of the principal islands in San Bernardino Strait, therefore, would provide this shorter route to the north.

The mission assigned the force was a twofold one. First, in order to permit safe passage of naval forces and transports through San Bernardino Strait in support of the Luzon campaign, the reinforced battalion was to clear the Balicuatro Islands, the northwestern tip of Samar, plus Capul Island and the Naranjo Islands. Subsequently, the force was to clear northern Samar of all organized enemy resistance.

By February 17, after a series of conferences and exchanges of messages with staff officers in Division and corps headquarters, the general plan of action was approved, but with two essential differences. Orders from higher headquarters stipulated that Capul and Biri, the two key island targets northwest and north of Samar, would be attacked prior to landings at Allen, at Samar's northwestern tip. In addition, D-day for these two island landings was set for February 19, and the exact time and the strength for each assault was set forth.

In order to free the entire 1st Battalion of the 182d Infantry for these operations, the 3d Battalion, 1st Filipino Infantry, on February 17, took over operations in and around Calbayog from the Bay Staters' Company C. At the same time other Filipino units assumed control of operations around Samar's capital as the 182d's 1st Battalion reorganized for the scheduled attacks.

Now granted slightly more than twenty-four hours for prior reconnaissance and for the preparation of final orders, the task-force commander and members of his staff sped up into the strait in a pair of PT boats on the morning of February 18. From positions offshore the group scanned the islands of Capul, Dalupiri and Biri, looking for routes of approach and landing beaches and for possible Japanese beach defenses. At Capul the enemy answered PT-boat fire with several rounds of 75mm gun fire and with a few bursts from automatic weapons.

Intelligence reports covering the sector of responsibility of the United States Army Forces on Samar placed four main groups of Japanese in the area: two on islands in the strait and two in northwestern Samar. On Capul, the westernmost of two small islands at the entrance to San Bernardino Strait off the northwestern tip of Samar, 150 to 250 Japanese were thought to hold strong positions. Biri, northernmost of a group of islands north of the same tip of Samar, was reported to be the hiding place of from 100 to 300 enemy. In northwestern Samar the two remaining groups were divided into a camp of not more than 400 at

Mauo, on the west coast, across from Dalupiri Island, and a group of approximately 400 somewhere around Calbayog.

Complying with the detailed instructions, General Slocum split the task force into two main groups. The commanding officer of the 182d's 1st Battalion, Lt. Col. John Watt, was charged with carrying out the assaults planned for northwestern Samar and for Capul and Biri. The commanding officer of the 1st Filipino Infantry was given the task of completing all other assigned missions elsewhere on Samar.

Initially, the 1st Filipino Infantry was assigned the job of preventing a reported concentration of Japanese near Villahermosa from joining with other enemy at Mauo. Later this mission was altered when the Filipinos were ordered to halt any attempted enemy movement to the east across the upper reaches of Highway 1, thereby fixing the Japanese in the northwestern corner of Samar.

The first operations called for under Americal Division and X Corps orders got under way at 0430 on February 19 as units of the 182d Infantry moved out from Catbalogan in landing craft of the 542d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment. At 0740 other landing craft carrying Company C of the 182d joined the convoy of small craft off Calbayog as the movement continued on up toward Capul and Dalupiri. At 1030 Battery B of the 246th Field Artillery, in LCMs, reported being in position to attempt support landings on Dalupiri's west coast, within howitzer range of the eastern shores of Capul.

At 1110 Battery B's first LCM beached near the *barrio* of Dalupiri in search of a suitable beach on which to land the remainder of the battery. Native guides were pressed into service and several hours of fruitless reconnaissance followed. Hidden rocks and coral reefs ruled out a number of otherwise useful stretches of sand. Finally, at 1640, lacking a suitable beach, Battery B was released from the Capul attack mission and ordered to proceed to Allen to await further instructions.

Meanwhile, other landing craft in the Capul force circled off the southern tip of Dalupiri, anticipating orders to move toward the objective. At 1330 a two-hour rainstorm which had plagued earlier efforts to initiate the operations broke and the haze over the area lifted. A brace of Navy fighters now roared in over the beach to bomb and strafe the target area for nearly an hour. At 1450 the escorting PT boats began moving back and forth in front of the beach on additional strafing missions. At 1510 an 81mm mortar was brought into action on one LCM as a suspected Japanese strongpoint was taken under fire.

At last, at 1522 the first LCM bearing men of the 182d's Company A

touched the shore four hundred yards north of the *barrio* of Capul. Within a matter of moments a firm beachhead was established and plans were made for a rapid campaign to clean up the island.

Just north of the *barrio* forward elements of the company quickly encountered an unestimated number of Japanese. Ineffective knee-mortar fire was directed on the Americal Division riflemen during the early stages of the skirmish. By 1630 all resistance in the area had been overcome as elements of Company A began a rapid movement to the north tip of the island. Later in the afternoon one Japanese soldier was captured as the hold on Capul was being extended.

Because it was thought that some unexpected attack in strength might develop in the immediate future, the battalion commander, once he reviewed the situation ashore, requested that Company A be reinforced by at least one more rifle platoon. Accordingly, General Slocum dispatched Company L, 1st Filipino Infantry, less two platoons, to Capul from Allen.

On the morning of February 20 patrols moved out from the *barrio* of Capul in all directions while the main effort of the company was being directed northward. One patrol moving westward into the island's interior ran into a strong group of Japanese a short distance from the *barrio*. Within ninety minutes the enemy force was scattered at a cost of twenty-eight dead as five American casualties were reported.

Among those listed as missing in action as a result of the day's action was Pfc. Melvin Rides-at-the-Door, of Browning, Montana. An observer for a mortar section attached to the attacking combat forces, Rides-at-the-Door, with two riflemen, volunteered to skirt a ridge in the hope of destroying a Japanese machine-gun position that was impeding the progress of the patrol. When approximately twenty-five yards from the position the enemy shifted their fire to the Indian, enabling his companions to withdraw to the main body of the patrol and subsequently engage the Japanese in a more effective fire fight. Rides-at-the-Door's unselfish and aggressive action prevented the enemy from inflicting additional casualties on the patrol and provided his comrades with the inspiration necessary to quickly achieve victory in the skirmish. Attempts to find the mortar observer after the engagement proved fruitless and he was reported missing in action.

In another fire fight the following day Pfc. Edward C. Armstrong, of Bennington, Vermont, earned for himself the Silver Star by remaining in the scrap despite two severe and painful wounds. Armstrong, a BAR-man, came under intense enemy frontal and flanking fire from rifles, machine guns and mortars soon after the fighting broke out. Although

wounded moments afterward, he volunteered to remain in position to cover the withdrawal of his platoon when it was decided to pull back. Armstrong poured forth a heavy and accurate flurry of automatic-weapons fire until the Japanese, sensing his mission, critically wounded him again. His companions evacuated him as the skirmish was temporarily broken off and hurried him to the rear for medical aid.

By February 23 Company A had scoured the island as far north as San Luis, near the northern tip, and had captured three British 75mm guns and a pair of damaged Japanese motor launches. Contacts were rare in the almost uneventful movement around the island in a counter-clockwise direction. On the previous day Company I of the 1st Filipino Infantry had joined in the action as had Battery B of the 246th Field Artillery.

At 0745 on February 25 two LCMs operating off the west coast of Capul intercepted six native canoes filled with Japanese fleeing from the island. Overwhelmed by the fire power of the machine guns in the landing craft, twenty-five enemy were written off as killed or drowned before the LCMs left the area. On the same evening the troops on Capul observed eight more small barges or native boats on and off the shores of Capul, but contact was not made with any of these. It was later assumed that most of the enemy remaining on Capul escaped at this time.

With Capul now virtually free of Japanese, Company A of the 182d, on February 27, moved out from the *barrio* of Sawang to join the remainder of the 1st Battalion at Allen. Battery B of the 246th Field Artillery, meanwhile, sailed for Allen from San Luis on the same afternoon. Operations on Capul were now turned over to 1st Filipino Infantry units as new actions on Samar began to take shape.

Shortly after the landings on Capul were begun, the island of Biri came into focus as an Americal Division target. At 0505, February 20, a dozen LCMs and four PT boats departed from the new 1st Battalion base camp at Allen on Samar, and headed toward Biri. Two hours later, a pair of LCMs broke off from the convoy and turned in the direction of Catarman to undertake a separate assignment.

Four Navy fighter planes zoomed in over Biri to bomb and strafe the designated beachhead in advance of the assault. At 0820 the first of the LCMs bearing the 182d Infantry's Company C hit the sands of Biri's shore under a tremendously heavy rain of enemy mortar and machine-gun fire. The light aerial bombardment, it seemed, had only succeeded in stirring up a hornets' nest at this point just north of the *barrio* of Biri.

Under the tremendous Japanese barrage on the beach, members of

the crews of the 542d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment's LCMs displayed great courage and devotion to duty. When one of the LCMs turned broadside to the beach and it was determined that the ramp would not go down, its crew went into action. Pvt. Thomas E. Gunning, of Spokane, Washington, attempting to go to the aid of the seriously wounded coxswain, was wounded twice before he could mount the gunwale to move aft. Despite this fact he ran to the stern and took over the helm just after the coxswain had managed to retract the craft from the beach. Staff Sgt. Ralph W. Chambers, of Pennsville, New Jersey, meanwhile had taken over the boat's machine gun when its gunner had been killed and had also helped the coxswain move the craft to safer waters. The coxswain of one of the other landing craft, too, had been seriously wounded twice, once on the way into the beach and again while the craft was moving broadside to the beach. Despite his wounds, the coxswain, Sgt. Franklin N. Mackie, of Brooklyn, stood by his post although nearly all other men in his crew had been killed.

After the landing craft had withdrawn quickly to safer waters to reorganize and transfer the wounded to other craft for treatment, it was determined that the LCMs had run aground too far from the water line to land personnel safely. A solid reef or sand bar just off the shore would have placed the men in water too deep to allow them to move quickly to dry ground. Wounded men might have drowned in the deep water after having fallen under the surface with their heavy combat packs.

A landing was quickly planned at a point three hundred yards below the island's principal *barrio*, but the operation was as quickly called off when it was learned that the ramps of two of the LCMs had suffered extensive damage as a result of the intense enemy fire. General Arnold, watching the proceedings in the X Corps crash boat, radioed General Slocum to withdraw the force to Allen if he was subsequently unable to land the troops at the new beachhead area south of the *barrio* of Biri.

Meanwhile, Battery B of the 246th Field Artillery, quietly carrying out its instructions, completed its landing on nearby Macarite Island, from which point the battery was to support the operations on Biri. No opposition was encountered as the trucks and howitzers moved over the beaches and into designated positions.

At 0905, in reply to General Arnold's instructions to withdraw the forces to Allen, General Slocum pointed out that the firing battery had safely reached Macarite Island and that it was in position to support actions on Biri. The task-force commander now asked that he be granted permission to land Company C on Macarite while plans were made to

leapfrog the troops across to Biri. The Americal Division commander was quick to voice his approval.

By 1048 the company was ashore on Macarite while preparations were begun for a shuttle movement across the narrow channel separating the island from Biri. In the meantime Navy fighters returned to bomb and strafe the strong enemy positions as light Japanese antiaircraft batteries boldly returned the fire.

Within two and a half hours an advanced command post of the 1st Battalion, 182d Infantry, was opened on Biri as the shore-to-shore shuttle movement roared along in high gear. After organizing a perimeter around the new beachhead, security patrols from Company C scoured the immediate area in search of the Japanese. Lack of contacts seemed to indicate that the enemy was not aware that the landing had been made or that it was even attempted. Plans were now made for a drive northward on the following morning with the intention of rapidly annihilating Biri's small but potent garrison situated around the main *barrio*.

At 0730 on February 21 Company C moved out from the beachhead and struck northward along the island's west coast. Three hours later the first main ridge between the perimeter and the objective was captured. A platoon from Company L of the 1st Filipino Infantry quickly took over its protection, allowing the assault troops to move on. By 1115 the forward elements of the company were just short of the southern limits of the town.

Here a grim, all-day fight developed rapidly as the enemy opened fire on the advancing Bay Staters. Progress slowed to a cautious inching forward by fire and movement. By 1615 a series of intense fire fights had broken out in the streets of the *barrio* as the bulk of the Japanese garrison entered the furious struggle. Thirty minutes later, however, the full power of Company C forced a breakthrough clear to the northern limits of the *barrio* and the battle was over.

While Company C's riflemen bulldozed their way through the stubbornly held town other Japanese were active a short distance to the north. At 1635 approximately twenty Japanese were seen on top of an ammunition dump within the strong enemy perimeter. Within a matter of seconds, however, all twenty disappeared as the dump erupted in a ball of flame and smoke. The blast also destroyed the Biri garrison's headquarters which had been set up in an abandoned school nearby, thereby making the task that much lighter for the men of the Americal Division.

The determined Japanese resistance encountered in the northern

half of the *barrio* proved later to have been offered from positions in the southern rim of the strong defensive area which the Japanese had established north of the town. It was at the beach on the western edge of this circle that the LCMs had met the murderous fire in the initial landing attempt on the previous morning.

Forward elements of Company C rolled on through the *barrio* of Biri through the now-abandoned defensive area, and by 1715 had set up a line for the night more than a mile north of the town. The day's activities had netted fifty-one Japanese dead and a prisoner at less than half that cost to the attacking forces.

For all intents and purposes these operations on February 21 concluded the active operations of the 182d Infantry on Biri. The bulk of the enemy garrison had been met, forced to fight, and then beaten. Patrols now ranged the length and breadth of the island without incident, finding only thirteen more enemy dead on February 23. Civilians reported killing two more Japanese and capturing two others on February 24 to round out the activities of the short campaign.

Company L of the 1st Filipino Infantry took over control of the island on February 23 as all assault troops moved back to Allen. Actions on Capul and Biri had brought death to 123 enemy and had resulted in the capture of a pair of prisoners. Save for a few stray Japanese not yet found, these two islands were now clear. Only the northwestern corner of Samar needed to be cleaned out in order to complete the orders given the forces on Samar by the Americal Division and X Corps.

As the first attack forces moved into Capul on February 19, other elements of the 1st Battalion, 182d Infantry, continued on up to Allen to establish a base camp quietly later the same day. During the next few days patrols moved out from Allen and from another base camp subsequently established at Catarman to cover the entire north with only a few relatively insignificant skirmishes.

However, reconnaissance groups moving south from Allen toward Mauo fared a bit differently. On February 23 a 182d Infantry patrol working through an area two thousand yards north of the mouth of the Mauo River, an area in which a group of Japanese had been seen on the previous day, strode into an enemy ambush. Eight Japanese were reported slain at a cost of three Bay State casualties. But when the patrol halted to reorganize after the withdrawal, it was found that two other men were missing from the group. A quick search of the area proved fruitless.

Subsequent patrol and major offensive actions in the Mauo sector

brought to light evidence of the fate which had befallen the two men. On February 26 a patrol found the automatic rifle with which one of the pair was known to have been armed. Several days later, in an abandoned Japanese hospital area, troops found two pairs of combat boots and a number of other articles positively identified as having been the property of the missing men. In the hospital several documents were found and sent back to Division headquarters for translation.

One of the papers, the personal diary of a Japanese enlisted man, grimly closed the search for the two Bay State infantrymen. Under an entry dated February 23, the unidentified enemy soldier wrote that a patrol of which he was a member, one consisting of fourteen men, had encountered American troops and that a ten-minute battle followed. He closed the entry with the terse statement:

“ . . . took two PW and MG ammunition.”

The following entry, dated February 24, stated the outcome briefly:

“ . . . the two PW taken yesterday were executed.”

Thus the fate of the two men became known. The manner in which they were executed was never determined, nor was it known whether the Japanese sought to obtain any information from their captives. At any rate, news of the execution of the pair spread throughout the Division and the American's infantrymen, to a man, vowed to remember the incident when again they would meet the Japanese.

By February 26 the entire 1st Battalion, 182d Infantry, had been reassembled in Allen in preparation for an offensive designed to clear the Japanese from the Mauo sector. The battalion was to be reinforced by elements of the 1st Filipino Infantry now also gathering in Allen.

Plans now called for a three-company attack from the north by the Bay Staters' 1st Battalion, together with support attacks by Companies F and K of the Filipino unit. The operations envisaged an envelopment of Mauo itself and Mount Bermodo in the interior to the east of Mauo. Approximately three hundred Japanese were now thought to be in this area which, on the whole, with its dense forests and undergrowth, was quite reminiscent of Bougainville and parts of Guadalcanal.

Crescent-shaped Mount Bermodo, key terrain feature in the sector, is eight hundred yards to the east of the mouth of the Mauo River. From it the enemy enjoyed a commanding view of the swamps and

paddies which lay between the hill mass and the *barrio* of Mauo. A network of trails to the east of Mount Bermodo offered the men of the Americal excellent avenues of approach, but, at the same time, afforded the Japanese amply covered routes of withdrawal.

As a preliminary to the main effort, a strong patrol from Company C of the 182d Infantry moved down from Allen on February 27 to probe at the Mount Bermodo defensive area. Strong Japanese positions at the very outskirts of the sector halted the patrol later in the day. Pulling back a short distance to the north, the patrol, on being joined by the remainder of the company, set up camp for the night prior to the opening of the all-out attacks on the following morning.

At 0700 on February 28 Company C struck southward along the west coast of Samar toward the *barrio* of Calabog. Not far from the village an intense fire fight developed as the Japanese resisted determined attempts to roll back their lines. By 1245, however, the battle had begun to diminish in intensity and fifteen minutes later it was over. After determining that the *barrio* now captured was not Calabog, the company pushed southward with renewed vigor and by dark had established a bivouac less than a thousand yards north of what actually was the *barrio* of Calabog.

Meanwhile, Company B of the 182d and Company K of the 1st Filipino Infantry moved south from their base camps, marching overland toward Mount Bermodo. Evening found both companies in bivouac a short distance from the hill mass after an uneventful day. Company B occupied positions about a thousand yards north of Mount Bermodo while the Filipino company had swung around to dig in at a point seven hundred yards east of the south end of the hill.

Attacks in force were on the docket for March 1 as the ring around the Japanese began to close. Company C moved south once again, killed eight Japanese north of Calabog and encircled the heavily defended *barrio* from the east.

By 0930 Company B was seriously engaged in a determined battle with Japanese troops at the north end of Mount Bermodo. Heavy fire from all types of enemy weapons met the advances of the Bay Staters as only minor gains were being reported. By mid-afternoon, seeing that no ground won could be consolidated before dark, the company had begun a withdrawal to a new bivouac one thousand yards east of the previous night's positions. A dozen Japanese had been reported killed by the infantrymen during the day's fighting.

In the meantime, the Filipinos' Company K, after being subjected to bursts of machine-gun fire and brief flurries of what appeared to be 75mm gun fire, succeeded in moving to the foothills of the half-moon hill mass at the north banks of the Mauo River. Here strong positions were organized for the night to beat off any possible Japanese attempt to force a withdrawal.

As part of the plan, Company F of the 1st Filipino Infantry, on February 28, had been moved down to Calagundian, four miles south of Mauo, with instructions to cut off any attempted enemy movement to the south along the coast. Starting a drive up toward Mauo to tighten the ring, the company reached the *barrio* of Erenas, halfway to Mauo, by the evening of February 28.

On the following morning Company F pushed north and by 1200 had reached the south banks of the mouth of the Mauo River. Now turning east to move inland and join the other attacking forces, the Filipinos found that a deep mangrove swamp stood in their way. After skirting the swamp around to the south and east, the company moved inland to a bivouac area 1,100 yards south of Mount Bermodo where a perimeter was established for the night.

The series of assaults was renewed on the morning of March 2 as Company C of the 182d secured the *barrio* of Calabog and pushed through to the south. The evening of an otherwise uneventful day found the leading elements of Company C just north of Mauo. A pair of 75mm guns had been found during the march and the bodies of two Japanese had been discovered.

Striking directly south from their bivouac area, men of the 182d's Company B moved quickly and quietly to the crest of Mount Bermodo to find that the Japanese had withdrawn, presumably to the east, under cover of darkness. Moving along the ridge and down to the banks of the river, the company hiked on into Mauo, near which *barrio* physical contact was made with the regiment's Company C.

At the same time, Company K of the 1st Filipino Infantry drove forward, killed one Japanese, and moved uneventfully westward along the southern extremities of Mount Bermodo. After locating the bodies of five other Japanese the company swung down into Mauo to join units of the 182d Infantry. The Filipinos' Company F, meanwhile, moved quietly out of its bivouac, crossed the river and proceeded into the coastal *barrio* without incident.

On the morning of March 1, Company A of the 182d Infantry, in

reserve for the operation, crossed the line of departure and hustled south to a bivouac eight hundred yards north of Company C's positions then north of Calabog. The next morning the troops crossed over to what had been Company B's old perimeter and then doubled back to positions close to the northwestern slopes of Mount Bermodo. Here a series of trail blocks was established in order to cope with stray Japanese wandering through the area. The mission of the reserve company was brought to a close on March 3 when the trail blocks were ordered abandoned.

At 0900 on March 4, after patrols had thoroughly scoured the Mauo-Mount Bermodo sector, responsibility for further operations was turned over to the 1st Filipino Infantry and attached guerrilla forces. All units of the Americal Division now on Samar gathered at Allen and by 1845 the first units had departed in landing craft for the trip back to Leyte. By March 9 all Division units on Samar had been returned to Leyte and had reverted to control of the parent units. At this time Headquarters, United States Army Forces, Samar, ceased to exist.

As the operations on Samar were being brought to a close, other troops of the Americal Division were making additional contributions to the establishment of the shorter overwater transport route to Luzon. Farther to the west and northwest of San Bernardino Strait lay two other islands still under Japanese control which, if not cleared, could continue to be a source of harassment to shipping moving through the channels. Ticao, the southeasternmost of the pair, a spindle-shaped island 23.5 miles long and 7 miles wide, was thought to be free of Japanese. Burias, 43 miles long and not more than 11 miles wide, was known to contain a garrison of some one hundred Japanese. The two islands, situated between Masbate and southeastern Luzon, offered the enemy excellent observation of seaborne traffic moving through adjacent Masbate, Ticao and Burias Passes.

In late February, in combat instructions to Eighth Army headquarters, General MacArthur directed that Ticao and Burias be secured as soon as possible. Assigned first to the Americal Division, the mission was eventually passed to the 1st Battalion, 132d Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. Raymond E. Daehler. Movement to the target area for the invasion of the islands was to be carried out under the control of Eighth Army, but active operations ashore, once initiated, were to be completed under Americal Division guidance.

By February 28 all was in readiness for the assaults on the two

strategic islands. Loading operations began at White Beach, on Leyte, and by the following morning, March 1, these units had embarked:

1st Battalion, 132d Infantry
 Detachment, Americal Division Artillery
 Detachment, 26th Signal Company
 Detachment, 721st Ordnance LM Company
 17th Portable Surgical Hospital
 97th Infantry Regiment (Philippine guerrilla forces)

Simultaneous landings were now planned for both targets, with, as might be expected from estimates of enemy strength, the bulk of the forces landing on Burias. Final assault plans were ironed out as the force halted at Catbalogan, on Samar, on the afternoon of March 1.

On the following morning the Burias assault force, consisting of the 132d Infantry's 1st Battalion, reinforced, less Company C, departed from Catbalogan and headed northwestward toward the objective. Later the same day the Ticao force, comprised of Company C, 132d Infantry, followed out of Catbalogan.

At dawn on March 3 a lone destroyer joined the convoy off the shores of Burias and, aided by an LCS, opened fire on targets of opportunity along the island's southwest coast. Nabasagen, one of Burias Island's principal *barrios*, became the chief target for the heavy guns of the two ships as a number of Japanese were seen on the beach. Before long a small ammunition dump and a nearby fuel dump went up in flames and smoke.

At 0630 Company A of the 132d, leading the 1st Battalion, established a small beachhead without incident at a point two thousand yards north of Nabasagen. Within an hour's time the remainder of the battalion was ashore and a strong perimeter was in process of organization around the beachhead.

After reorganizing on the shores of the island, Company A struck southward toward Nabasagen, thoroughly and cautiously scouting the coast line en route to the *barrio*. Early the following morning the leading elements of the company moved into Nabasagen and promptly discovered thirty-three fresh graves and fifteen additional unburied bodies, definite signs of an effective pre-invasion barrage.

Following the uneventful capture of Nabasagen a water-borne patrol comprised of men from Company A began leapfrogging southward along

the coast toward the lower end of Burias. By March 6 the group returned to Nabasagen with nothing to report.

Meanwhile, a patrol from Company B was sent across the island to Claveria, reaching the eastern shore on March 4. Reports from civilians indicated that thirty-seven armed Japanese were located just south of the *barrio* and immediate attack plans were drawn up. Before the strike was undertaken the patrol was reinforced by a 60mm mortar section and a section of light machine guns. At 0730, March 6, contact was finally made with the group five hundred yards south of Claveria. The fire power of the patrol forced an estimated eighteen Japanese to break and flee, and eight dead were left behind. Among the items of equipment taken were nine rifles, one of which was a U.S. model, two machine guns and a knee mortar.

In spite of heavy casualties inflicted on his machine-gun section as it was being moved into action, Pfc. Roy F. Brassfield, of Stigler, Oklahoma, single-handedly accomplished his section's mission and distinguished himself in so doing. As his section attempted to set up its machine gun the squad leader was wounded and the gunner was killed. Left alone by these developments, Brassfield, without help, set up the gun, loaded it, and subsequently maintained a steady and effective stream of fire against the enemy until ordered to withdraw. The very fact that the Oklahoma youngster was able to place his weapon in action contributed materially to the ultimate success of the patrol's activities.

On March 5 a large and powerful guerrilla force pulled into Nabasagen and soon began taking over patrol and garrison responsibilities in various parts of the island. Patrols from the 132d Infantry were still active, however, as on March 6 two platoons from Company A departed from Nabasagen in LVTs and DUKWs to search the northern shores of the island. After moving as far north as Illog Bay without encountering enemy forces, the group gave up the search and returned to the battalion's base camp.

By March 11, when it was estimated that only twenty-five Japanese remained alive on Burias, guerrilla forces were released from attachment to the 132d Infantry's 1st Battalion and were given complete control of all operations on the island. With this, all Americal Division troops were withdrawn to Leyte.

In the meantime, at 0630 on March 3, at the same moment the first troops were hitting the shores of Burias, Company C of the 132d Infantry was moving across the shores of Ticao, to the southeast. While intelligence reports indicated that Ticao was not an assigned Japanese base of any

sort, it was altogether possible that enemy troops escaping from Leyte or Luzon might have set up bivouacs and defensive areas in scattered parts of the island.

After landing at San Fernando, on Ticao's eastern shore, elements of Company C moved quickly to San Jacinto, to the north, and to Buya, to the south. All units returned to the company command post later in the day with negative reports.

From this time until March 11 men of the company searched almost the entire coast of the island and covered much of the open interior as well. Civilians were interrogated at every opportunity in attempts to uncover hidden Japanese. Water-borne patrols scanned every coastal inlet for suspicious-looking barges and native craft, all to no avail. Negative reports soon became routine; no contacts; no signs of the enemy; nothing to report; no enemy activity in the area.

On March 5 troops of the guerrillas' 97th Infantry came ashore to assist in and eventually take over patrol and garrison duties. Six days later, satisfied that there were no enemy on the island, Company C was ordered withdrawn.

Landing craft carrying all elements of the Burias-Ticao assault force rendezvoused off Ticao on March 11 and then turned southeast to begin the journey back to White Beach on Leyte. By the following evening all units of the force had rejoined their parent organizations around Capoocan, ready for new combat assignments.

As a result of these operations on Samar, in San Bernardino Strait and on Burias and Ticao, the 1st Battalion, 182d Infantry, and the 1st Battalion, 132d Infantry, and attached troops had solidly secured the shortest overwater supply route to Manila from the eastern extremities of the Philippine archipelago. The combat actions had varied from intense, bitter fire fights to boring, uneventful patrols. The terrain over which the troops were required to operate ran the range from thick, dark, damp jungles and steep, wooded hills to open, rolling terrain. Hot, sticky weather and heavy tropical rains plagued the men as they strove to complete their assignments quickly and efficiently.

Activities of these units of the Americal Division brought death to 301 Japanese and forced eight others to surrender, all at relatively slight cost to the attacking forces. Any Japanese will to resist had now been broken and the surviving enemy forces had been scattered throughout the entire area in small, ineffective groups with which the capable guerrilla forces would be well able to deal.

Operating with the units of the Americal Division throughout the

entire area were elements of the organized guerrilla forces and the 1st Infantry of the Philippine Regular Army. All of these troops carried out their assigned duties well under the most adverse conditions. Without their aid the task of stamping out organized enemy resistance in the various target areas might well have been one of the greatest difficulty for the Bay Staters and the Illinois infantrymen.

Back on Leyte all units of the Americal Division were now in the midst of preparations for still another campaign against the Japanese. The Division, ready to operate directly under Eighth Army headquarters, was alive with rumors as to where the next fight might take place. In the command post the staff office tents buzzed with activity as planning conferences were held to iron out last-minute difficulties.

“When do we go?” “Where are we going?”

These questions were soon to be answered.

A Liberation is Planned

BY THE MIDDLE OF MARCH 1945 GENERAL MACARTHUR'S CAMPAIGN for the liberation of the Philippines had most successfully reached and passed its climax. The original toe-hold on the eastern shores of Leyte had been expanded great distances in many directions by a combination of decisive blows. The Japanese remaining in the islands could now plainly read the handwriting on the wall.

By this time U.S. troops had all but completed mopping-up operations in the original target area and the bitter struggle to clear Luzon was resulting in the wholesale breaking of Japanese defensive positions in the area around Manila. Palawan, in the western Philippines, had been invaded, and Zamboanga, in southwestern Mindanao, far to the south, was being retaken.

The central Philippines, therefore, had now been turned into a huge trap. Many thousands of Japanese within this giant circle were virtually prisoners. For them it was either death, surrender or capture. In the days and weeks not too far distant one of these three choices was to be offered the Japanese, individually and collectively, by units of Eighth Army, of which the Americal Division was an integral part.

The Palawan operation, begun on 28 February, was designed to gain control of the western limits of the broad Sulu Sea as a means of blocking Japanese withdrawal routes from the islands in the Visayas not yet under attack—Panay, Negros, Bohol and Cebu. The recapture of Zamboanga, begun with landings at San Mateo on March 10, would further extend control over the Sulu Sea and would, in addition, establish a springboard for other operations on Mindanao itself.

These two assaults, executed under the guidance of General Eichelberger's Eighth Army, were the first in a series called the Victor Operations. With the first two assigned target areas now under direct U.S. pressure, the remaining operations under this general heading were soon to follow, with the four Visayas islands as the principal target areas.

On March 18 a strong blow fell at the center of the vast sector still held by the encircled Japanese as elements of the 40th Infantry Division moved across the beaches at Tigbauan, on Panay. This, the third in the Victor series, had for its purpose the liberation of the island of Panay and Occidental Province of the island of Negros, a short distance to the east of Panay.

The invasion of Panay and the soon-to-follow landings in western Negros left only the islands of Cebu and Bohol and Oriental Province of Negros as target areas not yet attacked by troops of Eighth Army. By no means were these areas being overlooked, for one broad operation was to take care of these shortly.

Strategically, the Visayas were of importance to the plan for the complete liberation of the Philippines as well as to the broad plans for the continuation of the war in the Pacific. Occupation of Panay, Negros, Bohol and Cebu would place under U.S. and Allied control all of the inland water passages connecting the Visayan, the Mindanao and the Sulu Seas, allowing vital shipping to move at will through the entire archipelago with little or no risk of enemy attack.

Of significance was the fact that the city of Cebu, before the outbreak of the war, had been the second-ranking seaport in the islands. When liberated from the Japanese, the port could well be established as a base through which future operations could be staged and mounted.

Food soon became a factor worthy of the utmost consideration in connection with the liberation of the islands. The Filipinos now needed readily available supplies of local food to begin the restoration of strength and ability to stand alone. The Visayas had for many years been the principal food-producing centers in the Philippines. Some of the richest soil in the area, therefore, was now to be seized from the Japanese.

Eighth Army plans, written in accordance with directives from General MacArthur's headquarters, called for assaults to be made in the Cebu-Bohol-Negros Oriental area under the heading of Victor II. On March 3, 1945, in preparation for the attacks, General Eichelberger, in a radio message to western Leyte, said in part:

" . . . in order to stage and mount the Americal Division, less one regimental combat team, for the V-2 Operation, it is desired that all elements of the Division to be employed in this operation be relieved from all present missions by March 10, and that movement to staging areas commence on that date."

In this manner the task of liberating Cebu, Bohol and Oriental Province of Negros fell to General Arnold and the officers and men of the Americal.

At this time the major elements of the Division were engaged in a series of hard-fought struggles to clear the Japanese from the Abijao-Villaba sector in northwestern Leyte. Other units of the Division were moving ashore on Burias and Ticao to the northwest to clear the last of the straits south of Luzon.

Without delay the Commanding General and his G-3, Lt. Col. Samuel E. Gee, began preparing plans for the relief of all troops of the 132d and 182d Infantry Regiments in action in western Leyte and for the subsequent staging of the Division for the impending operation.

Since the Americal Division was directed to prepare for the Victor II operation with but two of its three regimental combat teams, General Arnold was required to choose which one of the three he wished to leave behind. Guided by the fact that all of its normally assigned and attached troops were now in western Leyte he chose to operate without the services of the 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team. On March 10, control of this unit passed from the Division directly to Eighth Army Area Command. At this same time, in order to bring the Division's two remaining infantry regiments closer to authorized combat strength, Eighth Army granted a Division request to transfer personnel from the 164th Infantry.

Meanwhile, Navy personnel were preparing to take up supporting roles in the forthcoming venture. On March 5, Rear Adm. W. M. Fechteler, commander of Amphibious Group 8 of the Seventh Fleet, was designated commander of Victor II Attack Group. Arriving on Leyte two days later on the USS *Spencer*, he promptly shifted his flag to the USS *Wasatch*. Following this the attack group commander entered into a series of conferences with the commanders of Eighth Army, the Americal Division and the Navy's Seventh Amphibious Force. Command of the attack group, however, was transferred to Capt. Albert T. Sprague, USN, on March 15, when Admiral Fechteler was ordered to return to the United States.

By March 16, the scene of the Division's preparations for the new campaign had shifted to Orange Beach, near Dulag, as the actual loading was undertaken. It was planned to have the loading of all equipment, supplies and troops completed by the evening of March 21, with few minor exceptions, but all did not go according to plan. Company B, 658th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, assigned to the force to transport

the assault waves ashore, did not arrive on Leyte until late in the evening of March 22. Consequently, the loading was not completed until 0300 on the following morning.

As a result of the delay in the completion of loading, it was not considered possible to carry out the scheduled rehearsal using the amphibian tractors—LVTs—and still meet a sailing deadline on the afternoon of March 23. On the basis of a subsequent request made by General Arnold and the Eighth Army commander, General MacArthur directed that the target date be set back twenty-four hours. With sufficient time now available, assault waves of both regiments went through strenuous practice landing sessions in LVTs on the afternoon of March 23, at Hinunangan Bay in southern Leyte.

With all preparations completed and with each of the 14,867 officers and men of the Division's assigned and attached units ready, the ships of the Victor II attack group sortied into Leyte Gulf at 1800 on March 24 and moved out toward the target area.

The Americal's first field order covering the Victor II operation had been issued on March 11. The multi-paged, much-annexed document outlined the specific and detailed missions of each of the combat and service organizations taking part in the fight. A thorough study of the papers and the accompanying maps and overlays produced a keen familiarity with the task ahead throughout the entire organization.

Following a preliminary naval bombardment troops of the Division were to assault and secure a beachhead in the vicinity of Talisay, some five miles to the southwest of the city of Cebu, capital of the island and province of Cebu. With this accomplished, a rapid advance to the northeast would then be initiated with the intention of capturing the capital and its vital harbor installations. Simultaneously, Lahug airfield, a short distance outside of the city to the north, would become the target for other infantrymen of the Americal. Beneath all this was a plan to locate and destroy all enemy forces found on the island.

As soon as possible after E-day—now set for March 26—units of the Division were to seize and secure Mactan and Olango Islands, to the east of Cebu City, capture the airfield on Mactan and destroy all enemy forces on both islands.

This phase—the assault phase—was the second of three phases included in the broad operational requirements set forth for Victor II by General MacArthur in early February. In accordance with these requirements, the preparatory phase had begun on March 20 when

planes of the Thirteenth Air Force began a series of raids on Japanese installations, supply dumps and coastal defenses on Cebu.

When the tactical situation on Cebu after E-day permitted it, the consolidation phase—the third and last in the general scheme—was to be opened with the landing of at least a reinforced infantry battalion on the shores of southern Bohol. This was to be followed shortly by a landing of a similar force in southeastern Negros Oriental.

Prior to the actual departure of the attack group, the commander of the Seventh Fleet directed that Task Force 74 provide for the support of the attack group by defending it from enemy surface attack en route to the target area. Task Force 74 was also to protect the vulnerable minesweepers as they moved ahead of the convoy into the waters near the beachhead. Finally, on E-day ships of the task force were to carry out the preliminary shelling of the beachhead and were to subsequently offer naval gunfire support for the troops ashore after H-hour.

Two separate aerial cover missions were now to be undertaken by units of the Thirteenth Air Force as E-day drew near. From 0730 to 1730 daily U.S. fighter planes were to maintain a constant surveillance over the ships en route to the target area to ward off enemy fighter and bomber attacks. On and after E-day other Thirteenth Air Force planes were to cover the beachhead from 1730 to 1800 each day. Because it was thought that the Japanese might then attempt an abortive air attack on the beachhead at dawn or dusk, the normally assigned fighter cover was to be reinforced during these critical hours.

Direct air support of ground actions on E-day was to be carried out by six Thirteenth Air Force A-20s or four B-24s relieved on station over the beachhead every two hours. This on-the-spot power was to be supplemented or reinforced, if needed, on call from the Americal Division command post afloat or ashore. During the first days of the campaign ahead, all scheduled fighter cover and direct-support aircraft were to be armed for strafing and light bombing in order to be ready to meet any contingency.

By the time the ships sortied into Leyte Gulf on the afternoon of March 24 all plans for the operation had been drawn up. En route to the target area the last briefings would take place. By the morning of March 26—E-day—all would be in readiness and the waiting would be over.

The island of Cebu itself was destined to become an obstacle of more than minor importance in the path of an easy fulfillment of the mission assigned the Americal Division. Stretching 140 miles in length

and ranging from twelve to twenty miles in width at its center, Cebu's 1,700 square miles rank it as the seventh largest island in the Philippines. Essentially an island mountain range, its two cores of hills rise in places to heights of more than three thousand feet. Through ages past many short, swift-flowing streams, excessively turbulent in rainy seasons, have cut deep ravines into Cebu's terrain so that countless steep-sided hills in the interior present rugged scenery indicative of extremely high mountains.

On the widest of Cebu's generally narrow coastal plains, against a truly natural harbor, is located the city of Cebu. Because this harbor could shelter many large ships at one time it had gained prewar importance as a trans-shipment point for cargoes moving between Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao. As a result, Cebu City had risen to a position of commercial and political importance in the central Philippines.

Unlike that of the majority of the other islands in the archipelago, Cebu's terrain is generally clear. The greater part of the island had long since been cleared for planting. With more than 159 persons per square kilometer placing it as the most densely populated island in the group, Cebu's overwhelmingly agricultural characteristics naturally followed. In the days before war came to the Pacific corn had been the island's chief food product. In other export lines coal, copper and cement flowed through the Cebu docks.

In the Cebu-Bohol-Negros Oriental area in the early days of March it was estimated that there were more than thirteen thousand Japanese troops, of which some twelve thousand were presumed to be on Cebu. Approximately ten thousand of these were spread along the island's east coast from Naga, southwest of the capital, to Liloan, to the northeast, with the bulk of the power concentrated around Cebu City. An estimated two thousand more occupied small garrisons along the north and northeast shores.

Detailed reports from Filipino guerrilla sources on the island set the actual combat strength of the Japanese Army units at about three thousand. Several sources identified the 173d Independent Infantry Battalion of the Japanese 102d Division as the main combat unit, thought to be at its full strength of 1,200 officers and men. To this number could be added a thousand seasoned troops of the Japanese 1st Division, survivors of the fruitless enemy attempt to stem the tide of U.S. progress on Leyte during the height of that campaign.

It was thought, too, that the effective combat strength of the enemy forces on Cebu might now be augmented by the employment of four

thousand officers and men of the 33d Special Naval Base Unit, an outfit capable of efficient combat operations. This, then, could possibly raise the fighting strength of the Americal Division's opponents-to-be to more than seven thousand troops.

From its headquarters in Cebu City the Japanese 25th Army, a unit paralleling a U.S. corps headquarters, exercised control over all Japanese units in the Visayas. Direct command of the combat units throughout the area, however, was passed down to the Japanese 102d Division. This responsibility was later delegated to the 102d Division's two brigades, the 77th on Negros and the 78th on Cebu.

Information from guerrilla headquarters on Cebu in mid-March indicated that the Japanese in Cebu City and its immediate environs were moving supplies from the city into prepared tunnels and caves on Babag Ridge, north and northwest of the city. After studying many reports concerning these movements, Lt. Col. Carl D. McFerren, the Americal's G-2, informed the Commanding General that the latter might expect only token resistance to the establishment of a beachhead at Talisay and to the capture of Cebu City. The G-2 pointed out, however, that the Japanese might offer most determined resistance to any serious thrusts into the mountains behind the capital.

The guerrilla forces on Cebu at this time were organized into the 82d Division of the Philippine Army, comprised of four infantry regiments (85th, 86th, 87th and 88th). After the invasion of Cebu in 1942 and the capture of Cebu City on April 8 of that year, frequent punitive raids in all parts of the island made efficient organization of the guerrillas practically impossible.

In March 1944 supplies for the Filipinos began to arrive on Cebu by many and varied secret routes. With this the organization of guerrilla forces began in earnest. Shortly after the first shipment of arms and ammunition came ashore, Lt. Col. James M. Cushing assumed command of the 82d Division and set about the task of establishing a workable intelligence chain.

Before the outbreak of the war the commander of the 82d Division had been a practicing mining engineer. Shortly before the U.S. surrender to the Japanese in the Philippines he had been commissioned a captain. Rather than give himself up when Cebu fell into the hands of the enemy, he fled to the hills where he remained in hiding for many months.

As E-day drew near the 8,500 guerrillas on Cebu were reported to be armed with only 2,700 assorted weapons, including thirty-three automatic rifles, fourteen machine guns, and a half-dozen mortars. A

few small ordnance shops had been set up to manufacture ammunition and to repair damaged equipment. In general, due to the lack of arms for the major portion of the 82d Division, the activities of the guerrillas were confined to small ambushes and to intermittent sniping at small, unprotected groups of Japanese.

Preparing for the arrival of the Americal Division, elements of the 82d Division moved into positions south of Naga, twelve miles below Cebu City, to prevent or delay enemy movements to the south. Between Tabuelan and Tuburan, in the northwest, the 88th Infantry was now engaged in a series of skirmishes with a strong enemy force. The remainder of the 82d Division occupied positions in the hills to the west and northwest of Cebu City. By their tactics in the days preceding E-day the Filipinos were denying the Japanese control of any but key points in the east central and northern sections of the island.

Probing the defenses being constructed and occupied by the Japanese in the Babag Ridge sector, elements of the 82d Division, on March 8, attacked the new enemy stronghold at a point eleven thousand yards northwest of the provincial capital. A Japanese report indicated that the guerrillas were able to force a deep penetration of the positions and that it was not until the following day that a strong counterattack restored the lines. Another unconfirmed enemy report stated that four companies were sent against Filipino positions northwest of Babag Ridge on March 20 and that these defenses were overrun after a hard, two-day fight.

With the Japanese now on edge, certain that the axe was to fall shortly, ships of the Victor II attack group churned their way across the Mindanao Sea toward the target area. Following a route to Cebu that Ferdinand Magellan might have taken 424 years before, the Americal Division was nearly ready to strike. E-day was at hand.

Beachhead!

AS THE FIRST FAINT FINGERS OF DAYLIGHT STREAKED THE SKIES east of the Philippine Islands on March 26, 1945, ships of the Victor II attack group, screened by the Seventh Fleet's Task Force 74, steamed into the southern limits of Bohol Strait and swung north. This was E-day for the Americal Division. Off to port loomed the island of Cebu, the target. To the north lay Talisay, the beachhead.

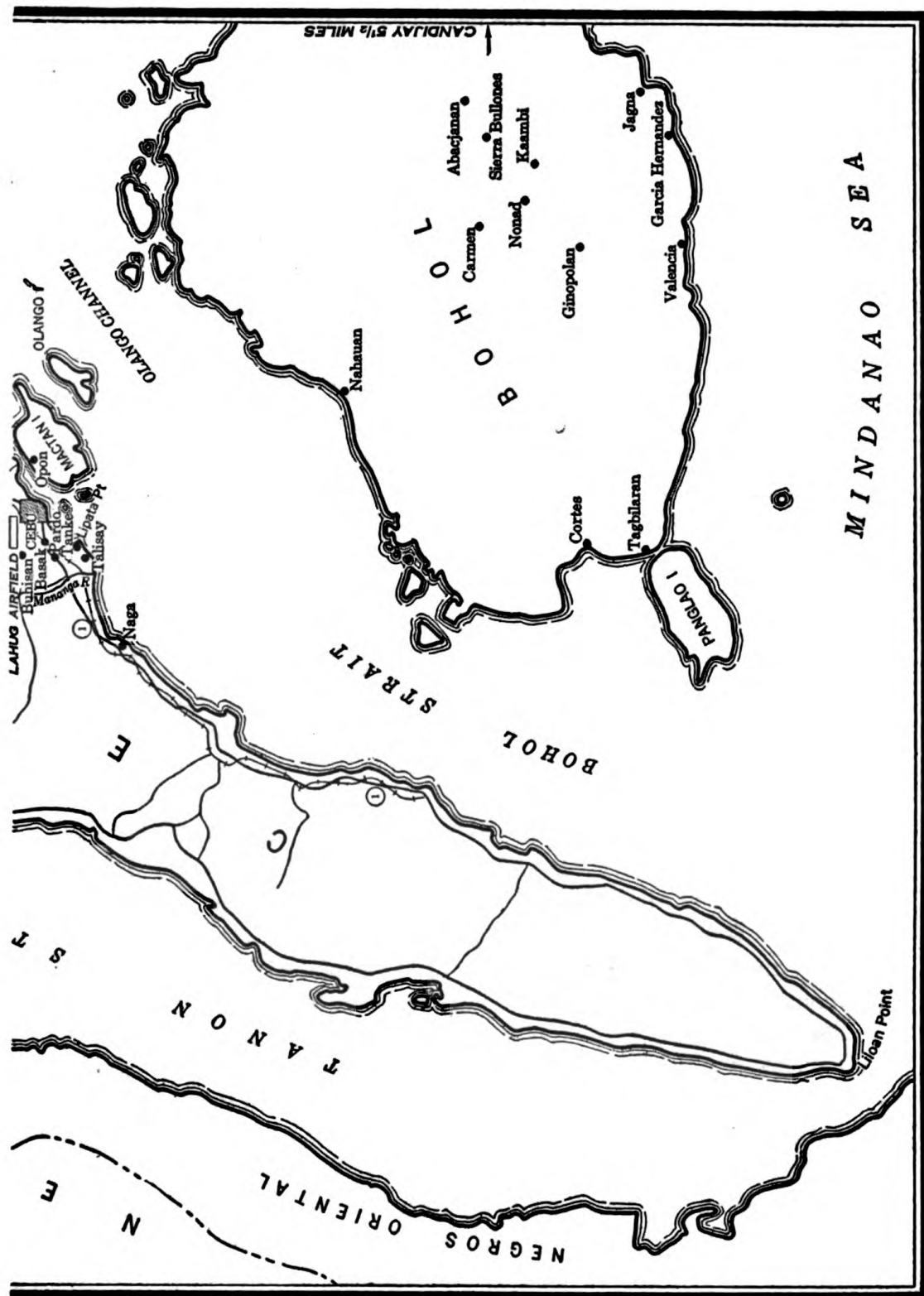
Breaking sharply from the formation the minesweepers churned ahead to clear the waters of mines. Early reports from the vessels, however, seemed to indicate that the Japanese had planted no such weapons. Simultaneously, PT boat patrols began to function throughout the entire area as an added safeguard.

As the day grew lighter and as H-hour drew nearer, officers and men of all units made last-minute checks on weapons, ammunition, vehicles and equipment. Everything seemed to be ready.

Scattered among the fifty-nine ships of the attack group were, in addition to organic units of the Americal Division, seven other combat and thirty-one service units and eleven detachments of naval personnel. Included in the attack group itself were five destroyers, four assault personnel destroyers (APDs), eight minesweepers, seventeen LSTs, eleven LSMs, and fourteen LCIs.

In Eighth Army reserve at this time were two regimental combat teams, either or both of which could be made available to the Commanding General, Americal Division, if additional troop strength were to be needed ashore. The first of the pair was the Division's own 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, in bivouac in western Leyte, awaiting orders to move into action. The other was the 503d Parachute Infantry Regimental Combat Team, a unit which had seen action in New Guinea and which had only recently taken part in the recapture of Corregidor in Manila Bay.

Precisely at 0730 ships of Task Force 74 trained their heavy guns



shoreward and opened fire on the beachhead. For an hour the merciless bombardment continued as tons upon tons of shells zoomed into their targets. Later, rocket-firing LCIs moved in to smother the beachhead with flaming blankets of high explosives. As the barrage rolled inland the first assault waves, in LVTs, moved away from the LST mother ships and sped toward the line of departure.

At 0830, exactly on schedule, the LVTs bearing the first attacking echelons of the Americal Division rolled up onto the shores of Cebu between the *barrios* of Talisay and Tanke, along a sector centered some five miles southwest of Cebu City. The invasion and liberation of Cebu had now begun in earnest.

Because the more than fourteen thousand men in the reinforced Americal Division did not greatly outnumber the estimated twelve thousand Japanese on the island at this time, Maj. Gen. William H. Arnold was required to devise a plan which would result in the most efficient use of the combat units at his disposal. Accordingly, the 132d Infantry, commanded by Col. Claude M. McQuarrie, was directed to land in column of battalions on the Division's right and was ordered to strike toward and secure Cebu City and its vital harbor installations. Meanwhile, the 182d Infantry, under Col. Floyd E. Dunn, after landing on the Division's left with two battalions abreast, was to secure the rail and road crossing of the Mananga River, northwest of the beachhead, and the first line of hills overlooking the coastal highway near Pardo, four thousand yards north of Talisay.

Once the beachhead was secure, the Philippine Army's 82d Division was to be placed under Americal Division control. Pre-invasion plans called for the guerrillas to attack and capture the reservoir and distribution tank at Buhisan, five thousand yards west of Cebu City. Later, other guerrilla units were to relieve troops of the Americal at the beachhead positions as new attacks toward the capital were being pressed.

Following its arrival on the beach, the Americal's 21st Reconnaissance Troop was to proceed to a designated assembly area to await assignment of reconnaissance missions under Division control. The troop was now also under instructions to be prepared to defend the southern flank of the beachhead in event of an attack.

Protection of the beachhead against tank or air attack was assigned to the attached 478th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion, while units of the 542d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment were to help ward off assaults by Japanese infantry units.

For direct artillery support the 246th Field Artillery was operating

under attachment to the 182d Infantry, while the 247th was similarly joined with the 132d Infantry. Control of both units was to revert to Division Artillery headquarters on call. In general support, meanwhile, was the 221st Field Artillery and the 80th Chemical Mortar Battalion's Company A. For closer support, however, one platoon from the mortar company had been attached to each of the two infantry regiments.

Following the schedule to the minute, five LVTs bearing men of the 1st Battalion, 182d Infantry, waddled out of the water on the Division's left, on Green Beach 1. In the center, on Green Beach 2, five more amtracs moved onto the sands with troops of the 182d's 3d Battalion. To Green Beach 3, on the right, came a like number of vehicles with the leading elements of the 132d Infantry's 1st Battalion. The first wave was now ashore. Only sporadic sniper fire and occasional wild bursts of machine-gun fire flew through the area as the amphibious tractors moved toward the palm groves across the beach.

While the Japanese resistance during the first moments of the landing was practically non-existent, unmanned and unprotected enemy defenses offered the first major stumbling block to the troops as they began to move inland. With a suddenness that was both surprising and devastating, ten of the first fifteen LVTs were abruptly disabled or destroyed by improvised mines with which the Japanese were found to have filled the beach.

Even though it was known in advance that the Japanese had erected fish traps and various types of obstacles along the Talisay-Tanke beach, the unexpected minefield which now confronted the Americal temporarily stumped the first assault waves and called a halt to all movements inland. A later and more detailed examination of the area proved that these beach defenses installed by the Japanese were the most elaborate and effective yet encountered in operations in the Philippines. Had the enemy chosen to defend them on the spot with characteristic vigor and determination, it is safe to say that the early moments of this now-young campaign on Cebu might well have been extremely costly ones.

As troops of the first wave dismounted from the LVTs, treated casualties and began to probe their way around for gaps in the minefield, the second wave came ashore on schedule. Before many more minutes passed the entire beach was jammed with stalled U.S. power being held in check by the undefended Japanese installations. An hour and a half of waiting and wondering passed before an effective series of paths through the three-rowed minefield had been cleared—an hour and a half in which anything might have happened.

With the lanes now opened into the palm groves, infantrymen of both regiments hurried forward to make up for lost time. Undamaged LVTs rumbled inland loaded with combat troops as the stalled drive moved ahead once again.

Early reconnaissance on the beach indicated that the right flank of the 132d Infantry's sector on Green Beach 3 provided the most suitable spot for the initial supply dump. Once this area had been designated by the Navy beachmaster, a steady flow of supplies began moving to the beach from the ships in the bay.

Coordinating their activities with those of the beachmaster's party, men of the 542d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment took over the task of landing troops, vehicles and supplies, and shuttling them to desired areas. The 542d was also charged now with the establishment of the first water point and a vehicle service point which were to be available to all Americal Division units in the first days of the Victor II operation.

By 0930—H plus 1—the medical operations ashore and afloat were well established, even though the beachhead was still jammed with troops. First-echelon emergency care of the first casualties was being handled by the collecting companies of the 121st Medical Battalion attached to each of the two regiments, while Company B, 262d Medical Battalion, added such other treatment as would be necessary to prepare the men for the trip back to a temporary LST hospital ship in the bay.

DUKWs of the 542d Engineers carefully sped the wounded back to the temporary hospital ship which was as yet unloaded. Amid a full array of personnel and equipment the physicians and surgeons of the 121st Medical Battalion took the final steps to make the men comfortable for the trip back to base hospitals on Leyte.

Noon of E-day was now drawing near. Advance elements of the Division were reporting significant early gains in the face of only scattered, ineffective Japanese resistance. Both attacking regiments reported finding numerous antitank ditches, log fences and steel-rail obstacles, all erected to block or delay the movement of tracked or wheeled vehicles. It was also found now that the Japanese had not limited their defensive preparations to the beachhead area alone. The *barrio* of Talisay, in the 182d Infantry's zone of operations, was studded with pillboxes and barricades. All roads leading inland from the beach and toward the southern extremities of Cebu City were mined. Yet, in spite of all these extensive preparations, the Japanese failed to man the overwhelming majority of these defenses.

It was now plain to see why the Japanese had built so elaborate a set of defenses and blocks in this area. Assuming that Cebu City, with its excellent harbor, would become a major objective in any U.S. assault on the island, the enemy examined the beaches in the vicinity. Only those at Liloan, to the northeast of the capital, and in the area between Talisay and Tanke offered suitable landing stretches. Since it was then apparent that the terrain inland from Talisay was more suitable for the development of troops once they had been put ashore, the island's high command reasoned that Talisay would be the logical U.S. choice.

On Highway 1, in mid-afternoon of March 26, elements of the 182d Infantry butted against a determined Japanese delaying force near Pardo, a small *barrio* halfway to Cebu City. The only important E-day ground action came to a close shortly afterward when the enemy group was forced to flee.

At 1615 General Arnold transferred his command post from the USS *Spencer*, the attack group flagship, to the shore, where he could now maintain closer contact with the gains being recorded.

As darkness fell over Cebu on March 26, all units were found to have secured their assigned E-day objectives. On the left of the Division's zone of action, the 182d Infantry's 1st Battalion had taken and was holding the road and rail crossing of the Mananga River. In the center the Bay Staters' 3d Battalion held the high ground west and southwest of Pardo. On the right, forward elements of the 132d Infantry's 1st Battalion had pushed into the outskirts of Basak, two miles southwest of Cebu City.

During the day's sporadic fighting, featured only by the short battle near Pardo, 88 Japanese were killed or found dead and 10 were taken prisoner. The Americal Division's losses were 8 killed and 39 wounded; the majority of these were suffered as a result of the heavily mined beachhead.

As the troops settled down for their first night on Cebu, the guerrillas' 82d Division sent word to General Arnold's headquarters that the E-day objectives assigned the 82d had been captured. A subsequent reconnaissance, however, indicated that this was not correct. Instead of having taken actual possession of the reservoir and the distribution tank, the guerrillas had moved into position on high ground overlooking the installations. In order to make certain that these vital points would not fall into enemy hands, Companies I and K of the 182d Infantry were sent to actually take the two points on the following morning, after which the guerrillas were to assume control.

By noon of E-day both light artillery battalions had come ashore and had checked on positions tentatively located on photomaps of the area before the landing. A short distance north of Talisay the 246th Field Artillery moved into position, while the 247th chose to emplace its howitzers in a field eight hundred yards north of San Roque, not far from the initial Division Artillery command post. Intermittent sniper fire in the area interfered with the work of organizing the positions, but by dark both units had completed registrations on base points in the target area.

Out in the bay things had gone smoothly for the greater part of the day as troops and supplies were sped toward the beach. At 1535, however, a lookout on the USS *Conyngham* reported seeing an unidentified object surface and subsequently submerge in the narrow channel leading up to Cebu City, north of the beachhead area. Forty minutes later, at 1615, guns on the *Conyngham* opened fire on what was reported to be the conning tower of a small enemy submarine.

As the USS *Flusser* moved in to assist the *Conyngham* in the attack on the undersea raider, all ships not beached were ordered to get under way immediately and clear the transport area. Two PCs joined in a sonar search for the craft as three APDs (the *Kephart*, the *Cofer* and the *Newman*) sped in for the kill. Although the first rounds fired at the tiny submarine bracketed it, no verification of damage could be made. The subsequent sonar search proved fruitless.

At 0035 on the morning of March 27, after all ships had withdrawn south into Bohol Strait, the USS *Newman* reported sighting a surfaced midget submarine at a point seventeen miles southwest of Cebu City, near the northern entrance to Bohol Strait. The enemy vessel came so close to the *Newman* that men aboard the APD were able to open fire with automatic weapons at a range of approximately a hundred yards.

Turning his ship toward the enemy, the *Newman's* skipper attempted to ram the craft but failed when it submerged. Depth charges were immediately dropped astern, following which the APD wheeled about to lay another pattern of charges. A sonar search was begun immediately, but nothing materialized. Although it could not be substantiated, it was assumed that the automatic-weapons fire and the first pattern of depth charges so damaged the submarine that it quickly sank to the bottom of Bohol Strait.

Following this, no further contacts were made with enemy naval units. After daylight on March 27 the ships were able to move back to

the beachhead area and continue with the unloading of the last of the troops, supplies and equipment.

Negligible Japanese defensive action characterized the contacts reported during the day of March 27. Continuing northeast on the main highway against scattered, ineffective enemy resistance, troops of the 1st and 3d Battalions, 132d Infantry, rolled into the outskirts of Cebu City in mid-afternoon. Here the drive slowed to a cautious inching through the deserted streets of the island's capital. By 1800 the Illinois infantrymen had secured the all-important dock area and had completed a reconnaissance of much of the southern half of the city.

In the meantime, holding its 1st Battalion on the Division's left flank in the Mananga River area, the 182d Infantry sent its two remaining battalions northeast from Pardo. Pouring into the northwest limits of Cebu City advance riflemen moved carefully into the provincial capitol building and completed scouting all its rooms and halls by 1630. Subsequently, the first major contact of the campaign developed as Bay Staters' attempts to fan out into high ground northwest of the city limits were turned back by strong fire from a number of heavy machine guns and mortars in the hills.

By the evening of March 27—E plus 1—the Americal Division had captured two of its three most important initial objectives. The harbor area of the island's capital was now open; the beaches at Talisay could now be abandoned in favor of the more direct supply route through the Cebu City docks. The capitol building had been taken under the very eyes of the enemy. Only Lahug airfield remained to be freed from enemy control. Victor II was now well on the road to success.

Before abandoning Cebu City on E-day the Japanese destroyed or damaged a number of buildings and homes which had previously been in good condition. Troops inspecting the capital city now found it a mass of rubble and ruin somewhat remindful of the results of the fighting in the European Theater of Operations. The damage, however, had not all been wrought by the enemy.

Filipinos, in April 1942, began the destruction of this once-proud city as fifteen thousand Japanese troops battled with defenders at the city limits. U.S. Navy carrier strikes in September 1944, before the invasion of Leyte, scattered tons of debris around the city's docks and sent several ships to the bottom of the harbor. Other air attacks before E-day were aimed at undamaged targets within the area. All the Japanese needed to do was to add a bit more, which they did.

As the troops quietly hiked into the city many hundreds of Filipinos

came out of hiding to welcome them, to rejoice at the liberation of their homes and to cheer the U.S. soldiers on in their pursuit of the Japanese. Among those who appeared as if from nowhere were more than a hundred foreign nationals, some of whom were Belgian, French, Spanish and Irish priests and nuns serving Cebu's predominantly Roman Catholic population. Also included were several Soviet nationals.

All the foreigners were reported to have been on Cebu at the outbreak of the war. When fighting broke out on the island, none took active part. After the Japanese moved into the capital none were interned and all indicated that they had not suffered personal mistreatment at the hands of the Japanese during the occupation of the capital.

However, the Sisters of the Order of Cananesses Missionaries of St. Augustine suffered a serious setback when the Japanese set fire to their convent and to St. Theresa College, a school which they operated, on March 26. A group of the white-clad nuns returned to the charred ruins on April 5 in an attempt to salvage what little they could for the uncertain future.

During the first two days of the operation the light planes of Division Artillery maintained an almost constant aerial coverage of the Americal's ground activities. Because no air strip would be immediately available around Talisay, arrangements were made with the Filipinos to operate the L-4s out of the guerrilla field at Tuburan, forty miles due north of Talisay on the island's northwest coast. On E minus 2 the pilots and observers flew from Valencia, on Leyte, to the Tuburan strip to await the landing of the troops.

An efficient shuttling of flights enabled at least one L-4 to be available for reconnaissance missions ahead of the advancing troops from the time the first assault waves hit the beach. An emergency strip was quickly scraped out in the beachhead area, but this was soon to be abandoned. A broad concrete road leading to the provincial capital was later to be the base of operations for the Americal's "air force."

Late afternoon reconnaissance on March 27 now indicated that the Japanese had gathered considerable strength on the high ground to the west and northwest of the capital. A number of positions were definitely located along a line beginning from a point two thousand yards north of Pardo and extending northeast to hills behind the provincial capitol building.

Attempting to capture the last of the trio of initial objectives, the 182d Infantry struck out toward Lahug airfield on the morning of March 28 with two battalions fanned out on a 2,500-yard front. On the

right the Bay Staters' 2d Battalion pushed generally eastward from the capitol building. On the left the 3d Battalion swung northeastward toward Guadalupe to move down on the objective from the northwest. Simultaneously, Hill 30 and Go Chan Hill, to the left-rear of the two battalions, were taken under attack by the 182d's 1st Battalion.

Action developed quickly in the 1st Battalion's sector while the 2d Battalion was moving onto the airfield itself. Elements of all three of the 1st Battalion's rifle companies struck at Hill 30 but were turned back by the first determined Japanese stands of the campaign. Finally, after several brutal and costly assaults, troops of the 182d managed to pierce the enemy defenses and turn the battle into a rout. Meanwhile, tanks of the 716th Tank Battalion came into action on the road to Guadalupe to aid troops of the 3d Battalion in the neutralization of more than thirty pillboxes. Later in the day the 2d Battalion reported the capture of Lahug airfield in the face of scattered resistance as well as heavy plunging fire from the hills to the northwest.

It was now plain to the Americal's commander that none of the three principal objectives now held by the Division would remain secure as long as the Japanese controlled the high ground to the west and northwest of the city. Accordingly, a series of operations was planned whereby the enemy would be driven from these many vantage points and which would result in the safeguarding of the U.S. hold on Cebu City and the plain surrounding it.

In the meantime, consolidation of the harbor area had been undertaken on March 27 with an assault against tiny Cautit Island by Company E, 132d Infantry. The full-scale shore-to-shore operation proved fruitless when a thorough search revealed no trace of Japanese on the island.

On March 28, in the wake of a minor preliminary naval bombardment, the 132d Infantry's Company G hopped across the bay to larger and more important Mactan Island. No opposition developed as the riflemen moved across the island. Opon airfield, Mactan's only air base, was quickly captured and found to be in operational condition. Most of the island's oil refineries were discovered to be masses of rubble as a result of Navy and Army air strikes made since September 1944.

The capture of Opon airfield now permitted General Arnold to establish a base for air traffic here rather than on the more dangerous Lahug airfield on the mainland of Cebu. Far beyond the range of any of the heavier Japanese guns, traffic could now move in and out of Opon unhampered in support of operations of the Americal.

The consolidation of the harbor area was completed on March 30 when other elements of the Division scouted Olango Island and reported it free of Japanese.

With the Talisay beachhead now long since secured, the 21st Reconnaissance Troop, under Capt. Howard N. Steff, was dispatched to Naga, twelve miles southwest of Cebu City, on March 28, to secure the town's cement plant and to turn its protection over to the guerrillas in the area. Late on the same afternoon leading elements of the troop found the plant intact and in working condition. After patrolling the area in cooperation with the Filipinos the troop returned to its base camp on the following day. Once again able to produce vitally needed cement for building purposes, the plant was to play an important part in the future plans for Cebu and the rest of the Philippines.

Back in the 182d Infantry's sector on March 29 efforts were now being undertaken to flank the strong Japanese positions on Go Chan Hill. Simultaneously frontal attacks were launched against the hill in the hope that pressure from two sides might crack the defenses.

To the 3d Battalion of the 182d fell the task of flanking Go Chan Hill. Carrying out this mission, Major Sutter E. Kunkel moved his troops to high ground in the vicinity of the racetrack, two thousand yards northwest of the capitol building. Enemy in positions overlooking the racetrack road unleashed a terrific volume of small-arms, machine-gun and mortar fire on the infantrymen as they hiked up the heavily mined road.

Meanwhile, the 182d's 1st Battalion, under Major John T. Murphy, supported by elements of Company B, 716th Tank Battalion, was pounding at the front gate of Go Chan Hill. After passing through a thick minefield at the base of the hill, riflemen pushed on up the slopes in the face of a heavy hail of all types of fire. Not far from the defensive positions on the crest of the hill the drive was finally forced to halt when an increase in the volume of Japanese fire inflicted additional serious casualties on the assault force.

While Company A was gaining a foothold on the eastern spur of Go Chan Hill, a group of tanks and a rifle platoon attempted to move around the right flank, northeast of the hill. Accurate enemy plunging fire turned back each flanking thrust in this area in spite of the fact that the tanks shelled the area heavily each time.

Subsequently the 1st Battalion tried to strike from the left of the hill, but again heavy Japanese fire precluded any success in this venture. As a result of the day's activities it was now decided to withdraw all

assault forces and to smother the ground with a merciless artillery and aerial bombardment before renewing the assaults.

While units of the Bay Staters' 1st Battalion were withdrawing from ground they had gained at great cost, the battalion was dealt a staggering blow when a pair of explosions shook the eastern spur of Go Chan Hill where Company A occupied newly won positions. Although only one tank was reported disabled, the company itself suffered so heavily in men killed, wounded and dazed by the blasts that it had to be withdrawn from the lines.

Once the explosions rocked what was to become known as Watt Hill the survivors of the casualty-ridden company rallied to evacuate the dead and wounded despite an intense barrage of Japanese mortar fire. Volunteers pitched in to organize new defenses against any enemy assault which might follow the catastrophe. Fortunately, the enemy stood fast, thereby missing a golden opportunity to inflict further damage on the already worn 1st Battalion.

Unable now to operate effectively as a unit, Company A was stripped of its remaining officers and men to reinforce the sagging strength of Companies B and C. For the time being, until reinforcements could be brought to the island, the 1st Battalion was to operate with only two rifle companies as Company A was retained in name only.

A subsequent examination of Watt Hill showed evidence that a number of caves on the hill had been filled with all types of explosives. These had been detonated by the enemy by means of a time fuze or by remote control from Go Chan Hill itself. It was certain that the blasts were no mere accidents.

On the morning of March 30, in vengeful attacks supported by all available artillery, chemical mortars and tanks, the entire 182d Infantry pushed forward in a coordinated attack against the mass of high ground designated as Hill 31, which hill mass included Go Chan Hill and its important lighthouse. In marked contrast to the previous day's results, these attacks were to mark the first major success in full-scale ground action since the opening of the Victor II operation.

At the outset of the day's activities the 478th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion went into action in direct support of the 182d. Employing its 20mm antiaircraft guns in direct fire from positions close to the scene of action, the battalion battered and smashed enemy fortifications as the Massachusetts infantrymen moved up.

Flamethrowers added strength to the attacks of the 182d's 2d Battalion striking at the Hill 31 area from the eastern flank. The 1st Battalion,

meanwhile, pushed back up Go Chan Hill from the front while the regiment's 3d Battalion swung wide around the hill to pounce on the Japanese from the rear. Pressure from three sides now brought reports of impressive gains during the first hours of the bitter struggle.

By late afternoon on March 29 the 182d Infantry had completely overrun the first line of defenses and were digging in for the night. On the next morning a renewed series of assaults brought Go Chan Hill itself within the Americal Division's lines. In the two-day battle eighty-five pillboxes were reported destroyed and more than two hundred Japanese were definitely listed as killed.

Meanwhile, the 132d Infantry had finished scouting Cebu City as the capital was being set up as the Division's base of operations. It was not long until General Arnold's command post was moved into the Cebu Normal School, offering the Americal's commander and his staff by far the most elaborate arrangement yet encountered by the Division.

With Cebu City safe in Division hands the 3d Battalion, 132d Infantry, moved up the main highway to quickly secure the *barrio* of Mandaue. In conjunction with the Illinois regiment's 1st Battalion, strong and intensive patrol actions were begun in the area to the northwest as troops moved into the hills northeast of the 182d Infantry's zone of action.

In the meantime, to the southwest of the Go Chan Hill sector, the Division's reserve battalion (2d Battalion, 132d Infantry), had now long since been in action against stubborn Japanese resistance in the hills northwest of Basak. Following the E-day landings at Talisay, Filipino units under Colonel Cushing were to have assumed control over these hills. As the Basak area was being secured on March 27 it was reported by the guerrillas that the hills had been taken.

On the morning of March 29, however, a routine patrol from Company E, 132d Infantry, ran into strong Japanese fire in the hills reported secured. The entire 2d Battalion was sent into the area under regimental control on March 30 to clean out the sector.

With a pair of self-propelled 105mm howitzers in direct support, the battalion, under Major Frederick L. Lochbiler, pushed up into the hills before what was still characterized as furious Japanese resistance. A seesaw battle developed rapidly as the enemy sought to fend off the steady advance. By nightfall the battalion had gained control of half of the ridge and had knocked out fifteen pillboxes.

On the next morning a slow, cautious drive was undertaken by the battalion as Japanese resistance again stiffened. A number of mine-

fields, all covered by machine-gun and mortar fire, cut progress to a minimum. By the evening of April 2, however, after a series of determined assaults on the strong defenses, the entire ridge area was wrested from Japanese control.

Following the capture of Go Chan Hill patrols from both the 132d and 182d Infantry Regiments moved into the foothills northwest of Cebu City in an attempt to determine more accurately the nature and extent of the Japanese defenses in the area. Based on reports from these patrols and on information from other sources, the Americal's G-2, Lt. Col. Carl D. McFerren, drew up his estimate of the enemy situation.

The core of Japanese resistance in this wide area, it was now felt, would ultimately be located on Babag Ridge, the highest ground in the interior behind Cebu City. Around this ridge the enemy had apparently constructed intricate defenses in depth, taking advantage of the network of hills rising to meet Babag Ridge. The outpost line of resistance, pierced for the first time with the capture of Go Chan Hill, was assumed to run along Hills 20, 30, 27 and 33, and into the hills north of Talamban. It was easy to visualize that the Japanese could withdraw from this line to another running through Hills 18, 19 and 21, Horseshoe Ridge, Coconut Hill, Bolo Ridge, and Hills 32 and 36. Beyond this line Hills 22, 24, 25 and 23 would form still another line in front of the crest of Babag Ridge.

Up through this strategic terrain, therefore, troops of the Americal would now have to grope, climb, struggle and fight if the Japanese on Cebu were to be beaten. The enemy forces held every advantage: position, observation, prepared fire lanes, large stores of supplies, and sufficient manpower. The task ahead looked to be one weighted down with insurmountable obstacles, but all units of the Division waded into it with a grim determination to see it through.

In a situation report forwarded to Lt. Gen. Robert L. Eichelberger, Eighth Army commander, on March 31, the Americal's Commanding General said, in part:

" . . . approximately two-thirds of the Japanese positions in the vicinity of Cebu City have been contacted . . . left flank has not been determined . . . Japanese position is estimated to cover twenty thousand yards . . . manned by approximately 7,500 troops . . . well equipped with light and heavy machine guns . . . reconnaissance in force up Highway No. 1 northeast of Cebu City develops numerous Japanese in position armed with small arms, machine guns, heavy mortars, 75mm

artillery and a possible heavier gun . . . four battalions seriously engaged . . . additional one is covering the right flank . . . remaining battalion will be required to determine and attack the left of the enemy position. . . . [It is] my considered opinion that operations will be slow and tedious and that expenditure of artillery ammunition will be high. . . . Casualties are increasing and will continue to do so . . . ”

Efforts to reduce these potent enemy defenses were begun on the morning of April 1 as the 2d Battalion, 182d Infantry, moved to the northeast of Go Chan Hill to strike at key Bolo Ridge, directly overlooking the *barrio* of Guadalupe. Tanks of the 716th Tank Battalion and M7s from the 182d's Cannon Company roared forward with the battalion in direct support as the assault gained early momentum.

By mid-morning, however, the drive had slowed to a careful inching forward by fire-and-movement as the Japanese reacted to the new U.S. thrust into the hills. Defensive fire from all types of weapons swept the battalion front and staggered the assault companies with heavy casualties. Litter parties went into action in the midst of a downpour of knee-mortar and 90mm mortar shells. Observers from the 246th Field Artillery helped ease the pressure by adjusting accurate artillery fire on key pillboxes on Bolo Ridge.

With only relatively insignificant gains having been recorded on the previous day, the attack was renewed on April 2. Coordinating a direct frontal attack with a flanking maneuver, the 182d's 2d Battalion finally succeeded in gaining a firm foothold on the lower slopes of Bolo Ridge as the combined infantry-tank-artillery power began to take effect.

Flamethrowers were employed with much success as the 182d Infantry drove up into the Bolo Ridge sector from Lahug airfield. One of the Bay Staters' flamethrower operators, Pfc. Bernice A. McCombs, of Pinson, Alabama, had a field day as he helped grind out the advance.

When leading elements of the 2d Battalion of the 182d were halted by furious 20mm cannon fire and deadly bursts from well placed light and heavy machine guns, McCombs went into action. Disregarding the intense hostile fire, he crawled forward, a perfect target with the bulky tank strapped to his back, and delivered a burst of flame at the leading enemy pillbox. This bold act so stunned the enemy that troops of the battalion were able to charge forward and neutralize the emplacement. A short time later another Japanese pillbox placed sufficiently strong fire on the attacking infantrymen to halt the advance.

McCombs moved out in front again, smothered the troublesome position in flame and smoke, and waved his comrades forward. Several times more during the day this Alabama soldier scored scorching triumphs over enemy emplacements as he repeated his earlier performances. His actions, according to his subsequent Silver Star citation, proved to be one of the decisive factors in the final success of the battalion's mission.

As this first foothold on Bolo Ridge was being won, troops of the 1st Battalion, 132d Infantry, moved up to organize positions in the area and to complete the relief of the Bay Staters' 2d Battalion. This accomplished, the Illinois men settled down to a night of hammering by machine-gun and mortar fire from Japanese outposts near the crest of the ridge. A number of small-scale enemy infiltration attempts were turned back prior to the following dawn before the Japanese could inflict damage.

Tanks moved up once more on the morning of April 3 and promptly smothered the positions from which the Japanese had been firing during the night. In the wake of this barrage Company C of the 132d attacked up the slopes and quickly drove to the crest of the hill. Bolo Ridge was now in the hands of the Americal after one last, brief struggle.

Meanwhile, on April 1, after having thoroughly scouted the Butuanon River sector, the 3d Battalion of the 132d established positions near Hill 27, three thousand yards northeast of Lahug airfield. Moving out toward Talamban, to the northwest, on the next morning leading elements of the battalion ran into well prepared positions near a road junction a thousand yards south of the *barrio*. Reports from patrols sent into the area indicated that the Japanese had prepared an elaborate set of fortifications and tunnels which would have to be softened up before a successful assault could be made.

On April 3, destroyers in the harbor trained their guns on the road junction and rained more than a thousand shells into the positions. Damage from this bombardment was reportedly heavy, but the Japanese suffered even more when eighteen B-24s plastered the area with seventy-two tons of bombs. To this eighteen P-38s added thirty-five napalm fire bombs which placed a pall of smoke over the entire sector. Patrols moving up to the road junction of April 5 reported that the few positions which had somehow escaped damage had been abandoned.

To the southwest on April 4 the entire 182d Infantry once again moved out against the Japanese as Horseshoe Ridge, two thousand yards northwest of Guadalupe, became the regimental objective. The fiercest fight yet recorded in the Victor II operation was swiftly to follow

as the once-firm Japanese grip on the outermost defenses was being hacked loose.

As the tank-supported attack moved up the ridge toward the crest, the Japanese suddenly decided to concentrate their counteractions on the potent, mobile armor. Individual enemy soldiers, armed with heavy charges of explosives, rushed out toward the tanks, bent upon destroying them in simultaneous missions of self-destruction. All of the enemy raiders completed the self-destruction phase of their missions, with the help of men of the Americal, but none managed to reach the tanks.

Before 1300 the left half of Horseshoe Ridge was grasped from Japanese control as the full fury of the assault was being unleashed upon the dazed enemy. Company I was quickly committed to action from regimental reserve to fill the gap between the 2d and 3d Battalions with orders to flush out and destroy by-passed enemy groups. By 1500 the center of the ridge was secured and reorganization of positions was undertaken under a hail of fire from adjacent hills.

A painful ankle wound suffered by Cpl. Lawrence V. Pearson, of Portland, Oregon, in mid-morning did not stop him from completing his day's work in support of the attack. Pearson, a radio operator with a 246th Field Artillery forward observer party attached to assault elements of the 182d Infantry, continued to carry his heavy radio even after he had been wounded and while it became more and more difficult for him to move around. In the early part of the afternoon, when he was unable to make radio contact with the rear to transmit fire missions back to his battalion, he hastened across rugged, open terrain under direct enemy observation and fire to restore wire communications that had been disrupted by a Japanese heavy mortar barrage. After the day's objective had been taken by the infantrymen his party supported, and after he considered his part of the mission completed, he finally admitted to the officer in command of his party that he had been wounded, at which time he was sent to the rear for treatment and evacuation.

In another part of the front during the day, Pfc. Richard E. Crosby, of Black Lake, Michigan, displayed a tremendous amount of courage and self-sacrifice in refusing treatment for his serious wounds. At the height of the attack Crosby was struck and gravely hurt in a thigh and a foot by shrapnel, but he directed aid men who came to his rescue to others in the immediate area whom he considered more seriously wounded. Seeing that a comrade had lost a leg and was bleeding profusely, he crawled to his side and applied a tourniquet to stop the flow of blood. He then bandaged the stump of the man's leg and

remained with him until a litter was brought up. Observing now that there were not enough litters for all the wounded, Crosby, in a heart-warming display of unselfishness, directed that the available litters be used for others and then crawled the entire distance down the hill to the aid station.

Shortly before dawn on April 5, the Japanese, after having quietly moved into position under cover of darkness, struck hard at the 182d Infantry's lines on the left and center portions of Horseshoe Ridge. It soon became apparent that additional help would be needed to turn back this fanatical attack in which the Japanese seemed bent upon success.

Hurried messages to company, battalion and regimental command posts in the rear alerted all idle personnel. In a matter of minutes clerks, typists and supply sergeants had dressed, snatched up their rifles, and were moving forward. Mess sergeants, cooks and KPs turned off field ranges, dropped pots and pans, grabbed weapons and ammunition and joined the Bay State reinforcements hurrying toward the thunder on Horseshoe Ridge.

Run into the lines almost at random, the additional personnel succeeded in turning the tide in favor of the Massachusetts infantrymen. By daylight the furious Japanese blows against the lines had been halted and subsequently thrown back.

Although the 182d Infantry had gained precious ground in the previous day's attacks and had now beaten back a savage Japanese attempt to wipe out this advantage, the enemy still remained in possession of the most important positions on Horseshoe Ridge. The exhausted Bay Staters could only look ahead to more attacks in their zone of action, but the attacks would have to wait while officers and men alike caught their breaths.

On April 3, realizing the futility of continuing to strike at the Babag Ridge defenses from the front with what forces he had at his disposal, General Arnold radioed the Eighth Army commander with the request that the Americal's 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, now held in army reserve, be sent to Cebu and released to Division control. In his request the General also asked that the combat team commander and his staff be ordered to report to the Americal Division command post as soon as possible to talk over plans for the employment of the 164th. On the following day the request was granted and information was received that the combat team would arrive from Leyte on or about April 9.

After strong combat patrols had paved the way for two days, the

3d Battalion, 132d Infantry, on April 7, moved a thousand yards northwest from Hill 27 in an unopposed march. Company K pushed a portion of high ground in the area against only slight opposition.

At 1745, however, some fifty Japanese struck the company as it began organizing defenses for the night. Machine guns and light and heavy mortars, coupled with fanatical blows, finally forced Company K to withdraw to safer ground in the rear closer to the remainder of the 3d Battalion.

On the next morning Companies I and L pushed northwestward in another unopposed drive which netted a ridge two thousand yards from Hill 27. In two of the seven pillboxes captured on the hill riflemen found a series of mines wired for remote detonation, similar, perhaps, to those which had resulted in the decimation of the 182d Infantry's Company A on Watt Hill a little more than a week before.

That the Japanese were fully aware of every move the American's assault troops were making was apparent in the fact that here, too, on the evening of April 8, Company L was forced to yield recently gained ground in the face of a strong enemy counterattack. It was not until 0400 on April 9 that intermittent firing by the enemy ceased in the sector.

The early stages of the bold and daring Japanese night attack on Company L cost Sgt. John R. Louis, of Chicago, all his hand grenades and all those of a number of the men of his company. Determined to replenish the supply, the Sergeant left the comparative safety of his foxhole, exposed himself to the full fury of the enemy assault, and moved through the open approximately 150 yards to the rear to a small store of ammunition. While returning with a new batch of grenades Louis was wounded in a leg by hostile machine-gun fire. Despite the intense pain of his serious wound he managed to deliver the sorely needed grenades without further injury to himself. Refusing medical aid, he remained with his platoon until the vicious attack was turned back.

With Hill 26, two thousand yards west of Talamban, as the battalion's objective, plans were made for a swing to the left. Small patrols moved out toward the hill to determine the most likely route of approach for the battalion. From within two hundred yards of the hill a reconnaissance group noted several pillboxes and a great deal of enemy activity.

Company I was shortly alerted and briefed for the thrust against Hill 26. By 0300 on April 10, the company passed through the lines of Company L and pushed on toward the objective. Before much ground had been covered in what was expected to be a quiet approach march,

the company suddenly came under heavy enemy fire from the front and both flanks.

Struggling now to hold the ground already gained, men of the company at first attempted to dig in. The enemy pressure increased to such proportions with alarming speed that Company I was eventually forced to pull back behind the Company L positions. The force had suffered heavily, but the Japanese could count almost forty of their own troops killed.

It was later determined that the Japanese troops engaged in this fire fight had not specifically planned to ambush Company I. Rather, in keeping with the tradition of attacking American positions just before dawn, this force was en route to pound at the lines of the 3d Battalion and had accidentally run into the leading elements of the 132d Infantry force moving to Hill 26.

After reorganizing within the battalion perimeter and checking the reports of security patrols, Company I moved out again at 1030. Supported now in the daylight operation by four M7s from the regiment's Cannon Company, three tanks, a pair of 57mm antitank guns and a 90mm anti-aircraft gun, the troops pushed forward to make contact with the Japanese shortly before noon. By 1600, after more than four hours of the most bitter fighting, the determined Illinois infantrymen overran the last pillbox and reported Hill 26 secure.

Communications, always a serious problem for units engaged in combat, would have broken down completely between the supporting M7s and the company had it not been for Cpl. Stephen H. Girth, of Louisville, Kentucky. When the self-propelled howitzers' radio contact with the company commander failed, Girth, a cannoneer in one of Cannon Company's sections, dismounted from his vehicle. Disregarding his own safety, he crossed and recrossed open terrain to carry messages from the rifle company commander to his superiors and to other tanks also supporting the riflemen. By his heroic, self-imposed mission, successfully performed in the face of Japanese heavy fire, the Corporal enabled the attack to continue without interruption.

These actions of elements of the 132d Infantry were but a part of a plan to shift the Americal Division's strength to the right as a means of placing pressure on the left flank of the Japanese line. During the fighting on Hill 26, the 2d Battalion, 182d Infantry, moved to the right to relieve the 132d's 1st Battalion on the high ground behind Guadalupe.

To the left of the 182d Infantry's lines, however, enemy strength on Hill 20 presented a serious threat to the safety of future advances.

These Japanese positions, situated between the racecourse and the reservoir, offered a base from which flanking attacks might be made against the Bay Staters. Once the gravity of this situation was fully appreciated it was decided that no further gains would be attempted in the sector until Hill 20 was either taken or neutralized.

Shortly before dawn on April 8, the 85th Infantry of the Filipino 82d Division, with Company E of the 182d Infantry in support, struck at elongated Hill 20 in the wake of a heavy artillery preparation. By 0845 two small knobs on the northeast end of the hill mass were in the hands of the Filipinos as the supporting elements of the 182d Infantry prepared to attack another on the next morning. Heavy fighting was reported on the hill on April 9 as the Japanese attempted to fend off the concerted Filipino-American drive. By 1530 the last of the enemy defenders had been slain and all of Hill 20 was under Americal Division control.

That Hill 20 was taken during the day was, in effect, a tribute to the determination of Tech. Sgt. James L. Simpson, of Los Angeles, one of Company E's squad leaders. In the midst of the action, when the forward progress of the company had been halted by heavy hostile fire, Simpson, under the covering fire of his squad, snaked up to an enemy emplacement, killed the machine-gunner and motioned his men forward. Later in the day a pair of flamethrowers was brought up for use against other stubborn enemy positions. As they were about to be placed in action one of the two exploded as a result of a leaky valve and three men were sprayed with the deadly fuel. In the confusion that naturally followed several of Simpson's men left their weapons. The Japanese, taking advantage of the situation, launched a sudden counterattack. The sergeant, torn between a desire to care for his men and his duty to repulse the attack, opened fire on the enemy with his rifle. Almost alone in the defense of his unit's position, he managed to turn back the drive with a number of well placed shots. Then he turned his attention to his men, reorganized them and continued with his assigned mission. Although his squad was reduced in strength from fourteen men to four during the attack on Hill 20, its actions were a deciding factor in the ultimate victory scored.

Two days later, attempts were made to straighten the 182d Infantry's lines between Horseshoe Ridge and Bolo Ridge as Company C moved out toward Coconut Hill, to the northwest. At 0655 heavy enemy fire greeted the men of the company as they began to move up the slopes of the hill. Pushing straight toward the crest, the company gained ground

rapidly at first. In mid-afternoon, however, increasingly intense enemy fire coming from an adjacent ridge overlooking Coconut Hill staggered the company and ground the attack to a halt just short of the crest of the objective.

Quickly, Company A of the 182d, born anew with a mixture of veterans and green replacements, entered the picture. Joining Company C on the hill, both units held the ground for the remainder of the day despite the tremendous pressure of the deadly enemy fire. During the night which followed the entire 1st Battalion was peppered with mortar, machine-gun and small-arms fire. The entire battalion was alerted twice to repel Japanese infiltration parties.

After relieving Company A on the morning of April 12, Company B joined with Company C in a final coordinated attack against the Japanese on the crest of Coconut Hill. The enemy seriously delayed the combined frontal and flanking assaults with murderous barrages of 90mm mortar fire which inflicted many casualties on both units. At 1640, in spite of every enemy effort to forestall the decision, the two companies reported the capture of Coconut Hill.

By the evening of April 11 plans for the employment of the 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team had been completed and put into effect. All troops of the combat team were now on Cebu and were en route to designated assembly areas. The 164th's 3d Battalion, however, was left in Cebu City, along with Battery A of the direct-support 245th Field Artillery, to prepare for another mission.

In general, the plan of operation for the North Dakotans and their supporting units envisaged a broad sweep around the Japanese right flank which was to be followed by a strong attack against the rear of the Babag Ridge defenses. Such a move, it was hoped, would divide the enemy's defensive attention to such an extent that a series of rapid penetrations could be made on all fronts.

Because guerrillas of the 82d Division now contained the Japanese right flank with patrol operations around Buhisan reservoir, it was now possible for the 164th Infantry to move around the flank and up the Mananga River without interference or detection. On April 11, as the North Dakota infantrymen moved up the river into the interior, attacks by other Americal Division riflemen kept the enemy attention focused toward Cebu City.

From the *barrio* of Taup, fifteen thousand yards northwest of the capital, troops of the 164th's 1st and 2d Battalion were to slip as quietly as possible into position and were to deliver their first blows against

Babag Ridge by surprise. Once the drive over the hills was initiated, the regiment was to continue with a determined drive over the hills to the southeast to make physical contact with elements of the Americal pushing into the hills from Cebu City.

The final all-out assault on the Babag Ridge defenses began on the morning of April 12 as the 3d Battalion, 182d Infantry, aided by the 2d Battalion's Company G, ground forward toward Hill 21. Attacking from the southeast, the battalion pounded at the frontal approaches to the hill time and again during the day, only to be thrown back on each occasion by unbelievably stubborn Japanese resistance. Later in the day the 2d Battalion of the 132d Infantry moved in to strike from the northeast, but the enemy promptly turned back this flanking attack with heavy losses. By dark the tank-supported attack was halted after no successes of importance had been recorded.

Because the situation required much movement across open terrain during the day, heavy casualties had to be accepted by Company G as the Japanese swept nearly all approaches to the hill with intense and accurate fire from automatic weapons of all calibers. Evacuation of these casualties across the exposed ground presented a problem that was not easily solved without the utmost in sheer determination and self-sacrifice on the part of many.

When Pfc. Mario L. Latino, of Bernardsville, New Jersey, noticed an infantryman fall seriously wounded to the ground he left the position he occupied and dashed to the man's side. As he neared the stricken soldier Latino suffered a serious and painful wound in the wrist, but he nevertheless continued on his voluntary mission of mercy. While dragging the wounded man across shell-pocked terrain that offered extremely poor footing he saw another soldier who had been hit by the deadly hostile fire. Realizing that the second stricken rifleman could not help himself, Latino hurriedly delivered the first man to medical personnel in the rear and hastened back to rescue the other man, completely disregarding the fact that he himself had been wounded. Latino finally accepted medical treatment of his own wound when he had delivered his second charge to the company aid man.

After dark, Capt. John T. Murphy, commander of the 182d's Company G, took the situation in hand. Moving quietly up the hill in the blackness of the night, the company commander and his men crept to within a few yards of the Japanese defenses and halted. Then, with startling suddenness the company lunged forward the last few yards with a daring night bayonet attack. The brazen maneuver caught

the Japanese completely off balance; it would seem that the enemy had had a patent on this type of attack—no Americans had ever done it before to their knowledge.

Taking advantage of the confusion caused by this brutal assault, the men drove to within seventy-five yards of the crest of the hill and halted at 2355 to reorganize and hold to their gains. Two and a half hours later, in the early hours of April 13, the Japanese countered with a hard blow at the company's precarious positions, but the tired infantrymen somehow managed to hold despite the fact that the enemy held every advantage in the book. At dawn other elements of the 182d moved up to take over and by 0900 all of Hill 21 had been cleared of the enemy.

In the meantime, behind the backs of the unsuspecting enemy, the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 164th Infantry moved to a new bivouac area only 1,200 yards from the crest of Babag Ridge in the darkness of the night of April 12. The surprise blow from the rear was to fall on the next morning.

In order to maintain the secrecy of the movement, the 245th Field Artillery moved quietly into position, laid the pieces and waited. No preparatory fires were to be loosed before the attack in order to preserve the silence in the valley behind Babag Ridge.

Both battalions of the 164th moved out noiselessly on the morning of April 13, but before long the Japanese became fully aware of both the presence and the intentions of the units. Artillery concentrations were now adjusted throughout the target area as strong resistance was encountered. During the day's fighting both battalions recorded only minor gains as footholds were being gained on the back-door entrances to Babag Ridge.

On the other side of the hills a pair of heavy air strikes paved the way for attempts of the 132d Infantry's 3d Battalion to reach and capture Hill 25, thought to be the most important link in the enemy lines in the Illinois regiment's sector. Intense defensive fire held initial gains to but a few yards in the opening hours of the attacks. Repeated thrusts against the strong positions proved fruitless. At 1500 on April 13 the attack was ordered abandoned as the 3d Battalion was whisked into regimental reserve.

Rather than risk additional casualties in new attacks against Hill 25, the 132d Infantry now embarked on a three-day peppering of the positions using strong reconnaissance and combat patrols. Demolition squads, heroically exposing themselves to sudden death, destroyed an

impressive number of pillboxes discovered and neutralized by the patrols. During this time the Japanese answered with less intense machine-gun fire and with several attempts to crack the regimental lines with small infiltration parties.

When it was felt that the time was at hand for new attacks, Company E of the 132d was alerted and sent forward. On the afternoon of April 17, behind a heavy mortar, cannon and artillery barrage, the company moved up the slopes of Hill 25 and shortly thereafter reported it taken without incident. It was later learned that the enemy had withdrawn in conformity with prepared evacuation plans.

A pattern of action much the same was carried out by the 182d Infantry's 2d Battalion in operations in the Hill 22 area on and after April 14. At 0615 on April 14 Companies E and F, supported by a trio of tanks, struck at Hill 22 only to be beaten back soundly by strong Japanese countermeasures. A thundering concentration of mortar and artillery fire fell on the enemy positions as the two companies withdrew to safety. On the next morning a new attack was aimed at the area between Hills 21 and 22, but terrain difficulties slowed the advance. However, by late afternoon on April 15, troops of the 2d Battalion succeeded in taking three-fourths of Hill 22.

After a day of rest during which patrols kept the Japanese alert, the 2d Battalion pressed up the draw east of Hill 22 at noon on April 17, with Companies F and G making gains almost immediately. Meanwhile, Company E pushed up along the top of the hill with nothing to report. After making certain of the capture of Hill 22, Companies F and G moved to the east to occupy Hill 24.

Behind Babag Ridge the 164th Infantry's sneak attack had gotten under way and the first minor gains had been reported. By dawn on April 14, as a result of a night maneuver, the 1st Battalion gained a firm grasp on the foothills of Babag Ridge itself. Other attacks in force followed during the day as the Japanese discovered that this new advance had been made.

Trouble appeared in both battalion sectors as troops pushed up over a series of grassy, open-topped hills. In two instances units of the 164th captured hills and were quickly forced to evacuate them when heavy mortar and machine-gun fire from adjacent hills made the positions untenable. On April 15, as elements of the 1st Battalion recorded important gains in that sector, Company G of the 164th was forced to vacate Hill 5 for the second straight day as casualties mounted.

Following a relatively quiet day on April 16, a day during which

limited gains were recorded by the 1st Battalion in attacks on strongly held enemy positions, the tempo of the North Dakotans' attacks was stepped up on the morning of April 17. The action spread out among the hills like a giant panorama before the regimental command post on a hill across the broad draw to the northwest.

Striking vengefully at Hill 5 for the third time, troops of Company G mounted the knob and held as mortar and artillery fire neutralized all of the mutually supporting enemy positions of the nearby hills. Aided by direct fire from a Cannon Company platoon, Company B, far to the left, secured an all-important hill in its sector. Later in the afternoon other elements of the 1st Battalion added significant gains against what was now being called dwindling Japanese resistance.

Spurred on by the successes scored in the front and rear on the previous day, patrols from all units hurried up into the hills on the morning of April 18 and kept moving. All seemed to be too quiet in the battle-scarred hills. At 1530, after an uneventful day of searching, Companies K and L of the 132d Infantry made physical contact with the 164th's Company B at the upper reaches of the Guadalupe road. Later in the day troops from the North Dakotans' Company F joined forces with elements of the 182d Infantry in the same area.

For all practical purposes this terminated active Americal Division operations in the Babag Ridge area. All principal pockets of Japanese resistance had been found and overrun. The few ineffective groups left in the area were now to be dealt with by the Filipino units under Colonel Cushing's 82d Division.

The question now arose in the minds of the members of the Americal Division staff as to what had become of the bulk of the 7,500 Japanese once known to have manned the Babag Ridge defenses. Because the south flank of the lines had long since been contained, it seemed certain that the Japanese could only have moved north. Subsequent reports bore out this contention.

Intelligence officers now felt that although the enemy had collected a great store of food and ammunition in the caves scattered throughout the now-abandoned defenses, a sufficient supply could scarcely have been gathered by the fleeing enemy units. Had the Japanese gone to the trouble of carrying out any significant amount of supplies as they evacuated the area, the withdrawal to the north might now be slowed.

Plans were now quickly prepared and put into operation as a chase was organized. Guerrillas hurriedly moved into the hills to take over the final mopping up behind the capital. The 164th Infantry, however,

managed to draw a brief respite at its base camp in Basak while preparing for another mission elsewhere in the Visayas.

The Japanese retreat northward from Babag Ridge, sudden and surprising as it was, now permanently secured the Cebu City area as a base for future operations. Lahug airfield could now be improved and placed in operation without interference. The harbor and dock area, operating in support of the Americal's campaign on the island, could be expanded to meet the needs of a large and important staging area. Many troops could be bivouacked on the broad plain around Cebu City. Much work needed to be done before the base could reach a position of importance, but service forces with the Americal dug into the task without hesitation.

Near Hill 26 late in the afternoon of April 18, a combat patrol from Company A, 132d Infantry, made contact with a group of Japanese who halted to fight and then fled after sundown. Later indications showed that this group might have been the first elements of the enemy rear guard encountered in the withdrawal from Babag Ridge, for the following day brought new and stronger contacts of a similar nature.

Moving across the Butuanon River north of Talamban on the morning of April 19 Company G of the 132d ran into a series of strong positions 1,500 yards from Talamban. After the initial reconnaissance had been completed, the company attacked at 1230. A short while later Company E moved into the fight on the left and promptly pushed forward. In the Company E sector, however, the Japanese fended off the thrust and countered with a blow of their own. By nightfall both companies had overcome all enemy resistance along the line of emplacements and a count of the dead revealed that Company E had killed 110 Japanese while Company G had slain 59.

The Americal Division's pursuit plans called for a series of divide-and-conquer operations designed to utilize the available combat troops with the utmost efficiency. In accordance with those plans the 132d Infantry's 3d Battalion seized a beachhead a short distance south of Danao, seventeen miles northeast of Cebu City, at 0700 on April 20. Only scattered contacts were made during the day by routine security patrols. Plans were now made for a drive to the south to trap enemy forces being chased up the coast by the other element of the Division.

Interrogation of civilians in the area indicated that the Japanese had moved a number of inadequately armed troops through Danao four or five days before. The retreating enemy groups, it was also

reported, were laden down with supplies and equipment, and horses dragged or carried other loads along the route.

During this time other infantrymen were completing a reconnaissance of the main coastal highway as far north as Consolación. Few contacts with small, ineffective groups of Japanese were reported. All signs seemed to point to the fact that the enemy had only recently passed through the area.

Civilians found along the route of retreat northward pointed out that the now-disorganized Japanese were resorting to numerous atrocities against the population as they fled from U.S. forces. Angered by these reports, General Arnold ordered a leaflet printed in Japanese, prepared and dropped on enemy troop concentrations by pilots and observers in Division Artillery's L-4s. Brief, forceful and to the point, the leaflet carried General Arnold's orders that the atrocities be stopped:

"The inhuman atrocities now being committed against innocent and helpless Philippine civilians by Japanese troops on Cebu will cease immediately.

"Let it be known that complete and accurate records are being made on each of these outrageous acts. Many among you who are guilty of such crimes are known to us by name. Unit commanders, responsible for the conduct of their men, are also known to us and will be caught, for there is no escape. And you will be punished for these crimes, so shocking that we are deeply angered at having to bring them to the attention of the subjects of a so-called civilized nation.

"Truly there are those among you who have sunk so low as to disgrace the name of Japan forever. No inglorious suicide on your part can erase what you have done.

"Once again: The harming of innocent Philippine civilians will cease immediately."

In an effort now to seal off the western coast of the island and halt any Japanese evacuation attempts, General Arnold ordered the 182d Infantry Regimental Combat Team assembled and moved to Tabuelan, on the northwest coast, thirty-six miles due north of Cebu City. The first units departed from the capital by truck on April 22 and headed across the island on the road to Toledo. By late afternoon the Bay Staters' 3d Battalion had reached Tabuelan and made contact with troops of the Filipino 88th Infantry.

A push was quickly made to Gumban Springs, two miles to the

east, and this point was secured at dusk. On the following day a number of other key points on high ground in the sector east and northeast fell in the face of moderate Japanese resistance. The 3d Battalion now pushed eastward along the Tabuelan–Sacsac road, encountering scattered enemy opposition.

Meanwhile, on the east coast, the 132d Infantry sent its 1st Battalion into the Danao beachhead to help clean out the sector before the drive south was undertaken. Aggressive combat patrols scoured the sector, located many small bands of confused Japanese and killed or scattered an impressive number of enemy. It became apparent that all enemy resistance in the sector had been overcome by the night of April 23 when both battalions marched quietly into the *barrio* of Danao.

Only widely scattered strongpoints faced the Illinois regiment's 2d Battalion during this time as it thrust northward up the coast from Consolación. By the afternoon of April 23 the leading elements of the battalion had pushed on into San Osmeña, six thousand yards south of Danao, with little of real importance to report.

It was now decided that a drive south from Danao would not be necessary due to the excellent progress being made by the 132d's 2d Battalion. Consequently, the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 132d were ordered to concentrate their efforts in a new assault to the north, with Catmon, fourteen miles above Danao, as the ultimate objective.

Across the island the 2d Battalion of the 182d Infantry joined the action in the Tabuelan sector on April 26. Company E moved out from Tabuelan to reinforce the Bay Staters' 3d Battalion in a strengthened drive eastward toward Sacsac. The battalion reported significant early gains as a number of Japanese groups averaging platoon strength were being met and defeated. On April 27, 7,500 yards east of Tabuelan, a network of heavily fortified positions was encountered which temporarily halted the forward movement of the battalion. Companies I and K were left to cope with the situation while the remainder of the reinforced battalion pushed on to the east.

In a shore-to-shore movement on April 27 elements of the 1st Battalion, 132d Infantry, leapfrogged north to Sogod Bay to set up a base from which they were to move north toward Sacsac to await the arrival of troops of the 182d's 3d Battalion en route from Tabuelan. With one platoon of M7s attached from Cannon Company, Company A of the 132d landed at Sogod, while Company B came ashore at Tabonoc, a short distance to the north.

On April 28, climaxing the twin drives, forward elements of the

3d Battalion, 182d Infantry, made contact with Companies A and B of the 132d in Sacsac, securing, for all practical purposes, the entire length of the Tabuelan-Sacsac road. These drives now made certain that the Japanese were not situated in any effective strength along either coast of the island south of the terminals of this important cross-island road. It was certain now that the bulk of the once-strong enemy garrison were scattered in the interior on either side of the newly captured highway.

George R. Garver, a private first class, of Arges, Indiana, played an important part in the task of cleaning out the last strongly emplaced group of enemy as the twin drives reached their climax. As scout for an advance platoon moving into a wooded area near Sacsac, Garver was quick to notice several Japanese gathered near the entrance to a cave. Without a moment's hesitation he moved into action, fired into the group as he moved forward, killing one and wounding another. By the time the action had developed he had helped kill four other Japanese and by his courageous action had undoubtedly saved his platoon from what might have been a costly ambush.

In order to prevent enemy forces trapped below the road from withdrawing across it farther to the north, the commander of the 182d Infantry fanned his 1st and 3d Battalions, reinforced by the Filipino 88th Infantry, out along the entire span of the road. That the Japanese, in some measure, retained a desire to move north as far as possible was now evidenced by the fact that a large number were killed attempting to sneak across the open expanse of the highway under cover of darkness.

Swinging south to a new base camp at Asturias, twenty miles below Tabuelan on the west coast, the 2d Battalion, 182d Infantry, now began a series of movements designed to compress the enemy into a smaller pocket in the interior. The coastal highway north of Asturias was thoroughly scouted as patrols moved inland up the Putat and Languyon Rivers. An increasing number of strong contacts indicated that the plan might be working. Every hut and shelter was burned to the ground to prevent occupation of them by the enemy. Every cave and possible hiding place was systematically searched, both in this particular sector and in others where mopping up operations were being carried out.

Meanwhile, the 132d Infantry regimental command post displaced northward to Catmon while the 3d Battalion, less Company L, jumped north to Sogod. On May 3, the 2d Battalion of the 132d moved to Mojon, on the Tabuelan-Sacsac road, to patrol the area. Searching parties

throughout the Illinois sector continued until May 7, with a number of sharp clashes with small Japanese forces being recorded.

On May 7 it was decided that the area covered by the 132d was sufficiently clear of Japanese to allow routine security patrols to cover the territory. Activities now dropped off sharply.

To the southwest, though, in the Asturias area, the Filipino 82d Division went into action as a unit on May 6 as it opened a drive northward through the mountainous interior from lines of departure along the Balamban River. Forcefully pressing forward in the face of generally dogged enemy resistance, the guerrillas gouged holes in the Japanese lines and eventually forced a slow, deliberate withdrawal to the north.

Shortly after the Filipino drive was initiated the 2d Battalion, 88th Infantry, was ordered to move to Tabuelan to take up a new mission, that of landing on Bantayan Island, just north of Cebu, locating and destroying all enemy forces and serving as the tiny island's garrison. Landing quietly at Santa Fe on May 8, the battalion covered the island rapidly on foot, by motorized patrol and by shore-to-shore shuttle movements around its coast. Several small groups of Japanese were found and annihilated before the island was declared free of the enemy.

As patrols from the Americal Division and those of the attached Filipinos tightened the noose around the Japanese south of the Tabuelan-Sacsac road, calls for other routine security and reconnaissance patrols in the northern part of the island drained heavily on available combat personnel. Early in May Battery B of the 746th Antiaircraft Artillery Gun Battalion offered the Division a provisional rifle company composed of an officer and sixty-one enlisted men with the intention of taking over patrol duties in the Catmon sector. This suggested other such temporary measures.

On May 10 additional infantry strength was added to the Americal when the 478th Provisional Infantry Battalion was formed from troops of the 478th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion and the 746th Antiaircraft Artillery Gun Battalion. The provisional battalion, operating as a unit from this time until June 13, turned in many exceedingly creditable performances in action in northern Cebu. Its very existence took a great load from the tired shoulders of the men of the 132d and 182d Infantry Regiments at a time when they most needed relief in any form.

Now feeling that a number of enemy might have fled to the northern tip of the island before the capture of the Tabuelan-Sacsac

highway, General Arnold ordered the area thoroughly patrolled. On May 7, in accordance with these instructions, the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 132d Infantry hurried north along the road to Sagay, three miles north of Sacsac. The advance continued uneventfully through Sagay and on to Ilihan, four miles farther north, where serious opposition was encountered.

Striking hard at this pocket of Japanese die-hards, the troops overran the enemy positions on May 8, after which the two battalions split. The 3d Battalion hiked up the northeast fork of the road from Ilihan as the 1st Battalion thrust up the northwest fork. Scattered contacts were reported in both battalion sectors during the days following, as much of the interior was scoured and cleaned of the enemy. By May 27, when the 1st Battalion secured the *barrio* of Bogo, at Cebu's northern tip, the entire area north of the cross-island road was pronounced secure.

This brought forth the conclusion that the Japanese had concentrated the bulk of the surviving members of their garrison in the area south of the road. As a final check, however, Company A of the 132d hopped across to Medellin Island, above Cebu, and found it clear on June 1.

On May 29, in preparation for the final assault on the trapped enemy forces, the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 182d Infantry were relieved by the 45th Coast Artillery Battalion and the 478th Provisional Infantry Battalion. The two Bay State battalions crossed over to Danao, on the east coast, and prepared for the last attacks. The 21st Reconnaissance Troop and the 2d Battalion, 132d Infantry, took over patrol responsibilities in the northern end of the island as the plans were completed.

The Americal's commander now directed that the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 132d Infantry strike south from Sogod and from Kantuma, farther inland. On the west coast the 182d Infantry's 2d Battalion was to advance inland and then turn generally north from a point near the headwaters of the Balamban River. During this time the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 182d were driving inland from Danao. Two battalions of the 88th Infantry were to attack southeast from Talamban on the west coast, preventing any Japanese escape from the trap in that direction. Lastly, the 86th and 87th Infantry Regiments were to assault the area from the south while the 85th Infantry hung to the rear as a reserve force.

Moderate to strong resistance faced this multi-pronged drive of the Americal Division as it began on May 30. In spite of the opposition which featured the use of countless light and heavy machine guns and mortars, the troops pushed steadily into the interior from all directions,

grinding out significant gains during the first week of action. Heavy concentrations of American mortar and artillery fire softened strong points for successful attacks as new successes were scored all around the ring. Shacks, lean-tos and caves were thoroughly and cautiously searched as patrols moved at will through the area.

On June 15, the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 132d Infantry were withdrawn from the area and ordered to the new regimental bivouac area at Liloan, ten miles northeast of Cebu City, where a large Americal Division base camp was being prepared. By June 20, as other units of the Americal were beginning movements south for a rest, the Japanese in the area had been reduced to fearful, ineffective groups which now were scattered at random around the hilly interior. Forceful patrolling by Americans and Filipinos alike had done the trick in these last active days of the Victor II operation on Cebu.

Once entirely relieved of combat duties by the 82d Division, the Americal Division concentrated its forces in the Liloan area and set about the task of improving unit bivouacs and making life more comfortable for all personnel. By July 1, when the last elements of the 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team moved into the Division base camp area, the entire Americal was grouped together in one closely confined area for the first time since the last days on Bougainville.

Setting up its command post in Carmen, twenty-one miles northeast of Cebu City, the 82d Division took over the task of garrisoning and patrolling the greater part of the island. During the weeks which now lay ahead many scattered contacts were reported as the guerrillas slowly sapped the remaining Japanese strength. Aiding in the early stages of this work were elements of the 164th Infantry as control of the patrol activities passed to Eighth Army Area Command. By the end of July, however, the 164th Infantry was returned to Americal Division control as a training program swung into high gear.

As in previous campaigns and engagements, the record of the Americal in Victor II now became largely that of the Division's three infantry regiments. Yet behind this record, as it was being written day by day, there was the continual hustle and bustle of the supporting combat and service troops whose actions were turned toward the all-out assistance of the courageous riflemen.

For Americal Division Artillery's four battalions the three-month campaign was marked by many more displacements than had been required in past campaigns. The only relatively static period for three of the four battalions was that between March 29 and April 19, the period

during which the battles around Babag Ridge thundered in full fury. Once the Japanese fled from their stronghold, trucks and tractors ground along the highways, with howitzers in tow, in support of the rapidly moving men of the infantry regiments.

In support of the 132d Infantry the 247th Field Artillery amply covered the eastern side of the island, aided at times by Battery A, 245th Field Artillery, and Battery B of the 221st. On the opposite side of the island, supporting the 182d Infantry, the 246th operated out of positions near Tabuelan. The 245th Field Artillery spent only a few brief days on Cebu, firing in support of the 164th Infantry in the rear-door attacks against Babag Ridge.

In addition to the organic battalions, Brig. Gen. LeCount H. Slocum, Division Artillery commander, had under his control the 478th Anti-aircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion, ashore since E-day; the 746th Antiaircraft Artillery Gun Battalion, a 90mm-gun unit which joined the Division on April 8; the 45th Coast Artillery Battalion; and Company A, 80th Chemical Mortar Battalion.

Each of these units turned from normal antiaircraft and coast defense missions to general-support roles when needed. The 90mm guns proved especially effective when used for direct fire on caves and solidly constructed pillboxes found among the Babag Ridge defenses. The 478th's automatic weapons also proved valuable for covering fire during infantry advances over open terrain during operations against the hard-to-crack lines outside the island's capital.

Unsung and almost forgotten as usual, the hard-working 21st Reconnaissance Troop did much to help locate important enemy positions and emplacements around Babag Ridge. Toward the close of active operations the troop took over foot and motorized patrols in the broad expanse of the northern end of the island, and also took part in operations elsewhere in the Visayas.

Medical units assigned to the Division and those attached did much to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded and to raise the morale of hospitalized men. The bulk of the work came under the supervision of medical officers of the 121st Medical Battalion, the Americal's organic medical unit.

These units and many others assigned and attached to the Americal, combat and service troops alike, performed countless thankless, back-breaking tasks while the infantrymen up front slugged it out with the Japanese. Engineers built and repaired roads and bridges. Wiremen strung and laid wire up one side of Cebu and down the other. Quartermaster

officers and men unloaded, sorted, reloaded and transported tons of supplies to all units on the island. These men, and many more, quietly and efficiently helped the infantrymen produce the Americal's Victor II successes. Without them it might have been far different.

Because reports from units of the Americal Division in action in another phase of the Victor II operation had not yet been compiled and forwarded to the Division command post, no summation of the total number of casualties, U.S. and Japanese, could be made at the end of June. Estimates, however, indicated that approximately nine thousand Japanese had been killed on Cebu alone in the ninety-seven-day campaign. The Americal's own casualties ran over two thousand in killed and wounded.

The relatively great cost to the Americal only serves now to reflect the bitterness with which the Japanese held to their strong positions on Babag Ridge in the early weeks of the operation. Initially, General Arnold had no choice but to attempt to force a break in the defenses by frontal assaults. Finally, the pressure from the rear, coupled with a determination to gain success, drove all units up into the hills to break the Japanese will to resist.

In a visit to Cebu during the heavy fighting Lt. Gen. Robert L. Eichelberger, Eighth Army commander, commented that, considering the forces involved, and their relative strengths, the Babag Ridge positions were the toughest to reduce that he had ever seen. This in itself amounted to a sincere commendation for the men whose task it had been actually to do the job.

Apart from the actual fighting on Cebu, the Victor II operation had featured combat activities elsewhere in the Visayas as the consolidation phase was begun, carried out and completed. Many more Japanese were encountered, killed or chased off in small groups by units of the Americal Division. Reports of these actions were now reaching Division in consolidated form. A study of these revealed much.

Consolidation

BACK ON LEYTE ON APRIL 5, 1945, OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team were pleased but hardly surprised when orders came from Eighth Army headquarters directing their movement to Cebu to rejoin the Americal Division. Official and unofficial reports from across the Camotes Sea seemed to point out the fact that the Division was facing a most stubborn enemy well situated in the intricate system of hills outside of Cebu City.

Loading operations for the combat team began the next day at Ipil, Leyte, a short distance south of Ormoc. Soft sand all but cemented several fully loaded LSTs on the beach and delayed the movement of the convoy. It was not until the afternoon of April 8 that the first elements of the 164th Infantry reached Cebu. The remainder of the combat team came ashore on the following morning as all units established base camps around Basak.

At this time, within its assigned zone of responsibility in the Visayas, there remained for the Americal Division two more target areas to be assaulted and secured under the consolidation phase of Victor II. Of the two areas, the closest to Cebu City was the one encompassing oval-shaped Bohol Island. Feeling that the tactical situation on Cebu warranted it, the Eighth Army commander, in early April, instructed the Americal's Commanding General to begin this third and final phase with a landing of at least one reinforced infantry battalion on Bohol no later than the morning of April 11.

By the evening of April 8 all of the detailed plans for Bohol's liberation had been completed. Orders to be issued to the assault troops were simple and to the point. On the target date selected the reinforced battalion was to land at and secure Tagbilaran, on the island's southwestern tip. Splitting into at least two groups, the battalion was then to begin a search for the Japanese with simultaneous drives to the east and northeast from Tagbilaran. The island of Panglao, across a narrow

channel from Tagbilaran, was also to be searched. All enemy forces found were to be destroyed or captured.

Counting on the scheduled arrival of the 164th Infantry from Leyte, word was sent to Col. William J. Mahoney, its regimental commander, that one of his battalions was to be assigned to the task of invading Bohol. The North Dakotans' 3d Battalion, first to arrive on Cebu, fell heir to the assignment with less than forty-eight hours to get set.

Soon to be opposing the 3d Battalion on Bohol was the enemy's 2d Company, 174th Independent Infantry Battalion, under Lt. Hadashi Watanabe. Guerrilla reports from the island set this company's strength at 158 officers and men. To this enemy force had been added elements of the Visayan Military Police Unit and some additional service troops. This presumably raised the enemy strength to approximately three hundred men. The entire Bohol garrison, however, was under the control of the 174th Independent Infantry Battalion headquarters in Dumaguete, capital of Negros Oriental, across the Mindanao Sea to the southwest.

A trio of guerrilla regiments on Bohol had been formed into Bohol Area Command under Major Ismael P. Ingeniero, with a reported strength of 3,700. An additional 2,100 other Filipinos were grouped into the irregular Bolo Battalion and the Volunteer Guards, but since these latter units lacked equipment, their activities had been rather limited.

Troops of Bohol Area Command were required to maintain contact with the Japanese garrison at all times. Constant scouting kept the enemy forces on the alert. Ambushes steadily sapped the strength of the Japanese garrison. However, the Filipinos seldom attempted concentrated attacks on enemy groups, but they never failed to fight when forced to do so by the Japanese.

Reports from the island prior to April 11 indicated that the town of Tagbilaran had been evacuated by the Japanese and that the bulk of the garrison had withdrawn into the central hills. It was thought now that the enemy was preparing defenses in the natural caves throughout the area, but this proved incorrect. It was later found that the Japanese moved into the interior only to avoid serious and costly fights with the guerrillas or with U.S. forces they thought might soon land on the island.

On April 10 a reconnaissance party consisting of the commander of the 164th's 3d Battalion, members of the battalion staff, Col. Harvey E. Landers, Division Artillery executive officer, representing the Division's G-3, and a Navy officer, landed at Tagbilaran without incident. The group went into conference immediately with guerrilla leaders in order to arrange for local guides during the operations ahead. Following this, the

group checked the town and the docks and made final plans for the landing on the next morning.

By evening the reinforced battalion combat team had completed loading on board a half-dozen LSMs and a like number of LCIs. Command of the force of 1,172 officers and men was now taken by Lt. Col. William H. Considine, the 164th Infantry's executive officer, while Major Francis T. Kane retained command of his 3d Battalion. As the dozen ships moved out of Cebu's harbor in the darkness, these units were on board:

- 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry Regiment
- Platoon, Cannon Company, 164th Infantry Regiment
- Battery A, 245th Field Artillery Battalion
- Platoon, Company C, 57th Engineer Combat Battalion
- Platoon, Company D, 121st Medical Battalion
- Detachment, 592d Joint Assault Signal Company
- 24th Philippine Civil Affairs Unit

Detachments from these units were also on board:

- 26th Signal Company
- 125th Quartermaster Company
- 110th QM Graves Registration Platoon
- 578th Ordnance Ammunition Company
- 636th Port Company
- 542d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment
- 399th Medical Collecting Company
- 10th Portable Surgical Hospital
- Combat Signal Photo Section
- G-2 Language Section
- G-2 Technical Intelligence Section
- G-2 Section
- Counterintelligence Detachment
- Civil Censorship
- Judge Advocate General's Department

At 0700 on the following morning, April 11, after a quiet voyage down from Cebu City, the reinforced 3d Battalion of the 164th Infantry began an unopposed landing at Tagbilaran. Personnel and equipment were hurried ashore as the town became the first base camp for the small task force. Motorized patrols were sent out immediately with the mission of moving halfway around the island's north and south coasts if possible.

Subsequent reports from the patrols were encouraging to some extent. The group moving along the northern coastal road soon reached the *barrio* of Nahauan, twenty-nine miles around from Tagbilaran, with nothing to report. The patrol covering the south coastal road sped on to Candijay, near the far end of the island, fifty-four miles by truck from Tagbilaran, with similar negative reports.

Knowing now that the main highway around to the south was clear of Japanese, the commander of the 3d Battalion ordered Company I to Candijay by truck. Later, when guerrilla reports indicated that no Japanese were to be found in the vicinity of Sierra Bullones, in south central Bohol, the remainder of the 3d Battalion moved out after Company I on foot.

Not content to rely on the accuracy of the reports from the swift-moving patrols, Companies K and L began patrolling the highway as they moved toward Candijay. For two days advance scouts paved the way for the main body of the remainder of the battalion. Finally, on April 15, the diligent efforts of the patrols bore fruit when a Japanese force of undetermined strength was contacted outside of Ginopolan, six miles above the coast and about halfway to Candijay. Small parties moved into the area to maintain contact with the enemy while Companies K and L grouped for the attack.

Reconnaissance now developed a series of positions located some 1,200 yards northeast of the *barrio*, as well as others on high ground 1,800 yards farther to the northeast. Plans were made for both rifle companies to make an all-out assault on the fortified sector in the hope that both series of defenses could be overrun on the same day. Meanwhile, Battery A, 245th Field Artillery, hauled its howitzers into the area to offer support to the actions.

At 0730 on April 17, Companies K and L struck at the first line of positions beyond Ginopolan in the wake of preparatory artillery fires adjusted from an L-4. Company K belted the enemy from the right while Company L attacked from the left. Determined enemy resistance slowed the advance during its early stages, but by 1100 both companies, after continuing to push forward relentlessly, had succeeded in driving the Japanese from the positions.

With the first objective taken the attack was pushed toward the second line of positions 1,800 yards away. Intensified enemy counter-action characterized the afternoon's fighting. Desperate Japanese resistance first slowed the advance and then halted it completely, short of the objective. At one time during the latter part of the afternoon elements of

the two-company assault force were forced to withdraw under an artillery-fired smoke screen when a group of Japanese threatened a counter-attack by circling the right flank of the advancing line.

Early next morning, after a second artillery barrage had paved the way, Company K shoved off against the stoutly defended positions. In the face of only moderate resistance the men of the company drove forward with new bursts of speed. By 1000 the objective was reported taken.

Because the enemy force encountered outside of Ginopolan was thought to comprise the bulk of Bohol's Japanese garrison, the task-force commander considered it necessary to employ all available troops in the operations in the area. Consequently, Company I was ordered to move from Candijay to rejoin the remainder of the 3d Battalion.

After the loss of the second line of emplacements near Ginopolan, the enemy spent a full day regrouping forces. On the night of April 19 Company K, still holding the second objective, was subjected to three heavy counterattacks, all of which were beaten back before the Japanese were able to score any successes. No count was made of the enemy dead, but it was certain that the Japanese had suffered heavily.

Plans were now made for a concerted drive northeast toward Sierra Bullones in an effort to tie down the enemy force and bring about a decisive engagement. The Japanese strength, not excessive even before the landing eight days previously, had been sapped by the two days of fighting outside of Ginopolan and by the savage counterattacks which had just been foiled. It was strongly felt that continued aggressive actions on the part of the entire force might result in the complete annihilation of the enemy garrison within a matter of days.

Company I entered the action on the morning of April 20 to swing wide around the left flank of the 3d Battalion with a blow aimed at the Japanese right flank. Meanwhile, Company L, on the left flank of the battalion, pushed straight to the northeast. A heavy pre-attack mortar and artillery preparation, it was soon found, had forced the enemy to pull back. Objectives were secured quietly as twenty-six Japanese were found dead.

Without delay patrols hurried after the Japanese in the direction of Nonad, through an almost endless series of weird-looking "hay mounds" which covered much of the interior of the island. Two days later forward elements of Company K ran into an unestimated number of enemy near Nonad and followed with a strong attack on the prepared positions. Fanatical Japanese resistance turned back initial attempts to break through the enemy lines. In an artillery-supported attack on April 23

Company L attacked the positions only to find that the Japanese had once again withdrawn, this time leaving seventeen dead behind.

The next afternoon a Company K patrol encountered eleven Japanese near the tiny *barrio* of Abacjanan, but the small enemy group turned and fled. Long-range rifle fire dropped six of the group as the enemy scattered.

Further operations in the push toward Sierra Bullones now seemed to indicate that the bulk of the Japanese forces on Bohol had been encountered and beaten in the ten days of action. Negative reports began to stream into the task-force command post as patrols scoured the entire sector. Guerrilla reports from other parts of the island were similarly negative. Intelligence "guesstimates" outlined the possibility that any Japanese now remaining alive on the island consisted only of small, ineffective groups with which the Filipino forces could easily deal.

Realizing now that Bohol was secure beyond doubt, General Arnold, on April 28, ordered the reinforced battalion to return to Cebu. Leaving Company I to act as the island's U.S. garrison, the bulk of the force departed from Tagbilaran on the next day.

During the week which followed, Company I, based at Carmen, in central Bohol, scoured much of the island with both motorized and foot patrols. On May 3 one patrol encountered a small enemy force near Kaambi, six miles southeast of Carmen, and killed seventeen Japanese in the fire fight which ensued.

Leaving only the troops of Bohol Area Command to cope with the remaining Japanese, Company I returned to Cebu on May 7. This move, however, resulted in Americal Division headquarters not being able to maintain a close check on the situation on the island due to communications difficulties. Accordingly, considering it expedient to set up a small U.S. garrison, an officer and forty-seven enlisted men from the Americal's 21st Reconnaissance Troop were sent to Bohol on May 13 with instructions to guard the harbor installations at Tagbilaran and to patrol the island with the guerrilla forces. At the termination of Victor II in late June the small garrison was withdrawn to Cebu to rejoin the Division.

Meanwhile, back of Cebu, the remainder of the 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team had completed its part in breaking Japanese resistance on stubbornly held Babag Ridge. By April 22 all elements of the 164th's 1st and 2d Battalion had reached the regimental base camp at Basak for a short rest and for a quick reorganization. Only routine

security patrols around the Basak area were maintained by units of the regiment.

Briefly, after moving back to Basak from behind Babag Ridge, the 245th Field Artillery, less its Battery A, took part in the pursuit of the fleeing Japanese, assuming the role of a general-support battalion. On April 20, the battalion moved into positions at Cabanbales after having been released from attachment to the 164th Infantry. Three days later the battalion was re-attached to the 164th and ordered back to Basak.

With the liberation of Bohol all but completely accomplished by the regiment's 3d Battalion, there now remained the province of Negros Oriental to be assaulted and secured before the Victor II operation's last phase could be said to be completed. Estimates of the enemy strength in the area to be attacked caused the Commanding General of the Americal to commit all available troops of the combat team to the operations on April 23. Once the orders reached the regimental command post, the combat-team commander, members of his staff and members of the staff of the 245th Field Artillery went into conference to set up the more precise details of the operation.

At H-hour on the assigned target date, April 26, the 1st Battalion of the 164th was to land near Looc, six miles generally northwest of Dumaguete, capital of the province of Negros Oriental, and begin a drive southeastward down the main highway, across the airfield and on to the city. The 2d Battalion was to come ashore twenty minutes later to initiate a drive to the southwest across the Ocoy River valley to Candauay in an attempt to cut off a Japanese retreat from Dumaguete westward into the hills.

In connection with the North Dakotans' attacks, the southern Negros guerrilla forces, with headquarters in Luzuriaga, five miles southwest of Dumaguete, were to halt or delay Japanese movement directly south from the city. With only a reasonable amount of good fortune, the bulk of the Japanese garrison might be trapped in the city and forced into a fight which could quickly terminate the operations in southern Negros.

Loading for the combat team began at the Cebu City docks on April 24. A shortage of LCIs in the Central Philippines, however, soon became apparent. To counteract this, higher headquarters prescribed a thirty-five per cent overloading of the craft, increasing the troop load normally carried from 182 officers and men to 245 for each vessel. This overloading was considered safe due to the shortness of the voyage to be undertaken and to the undisputed U.S. and Allied mastery of air and sea lanes in Philippine waters.

The shortage of landing craft also resulted in the postponement of the loading of elements of the combat team's supporting troops. These were now set to land either at Looc or at Dumaguete, as the situation permitted, on or about April 28.

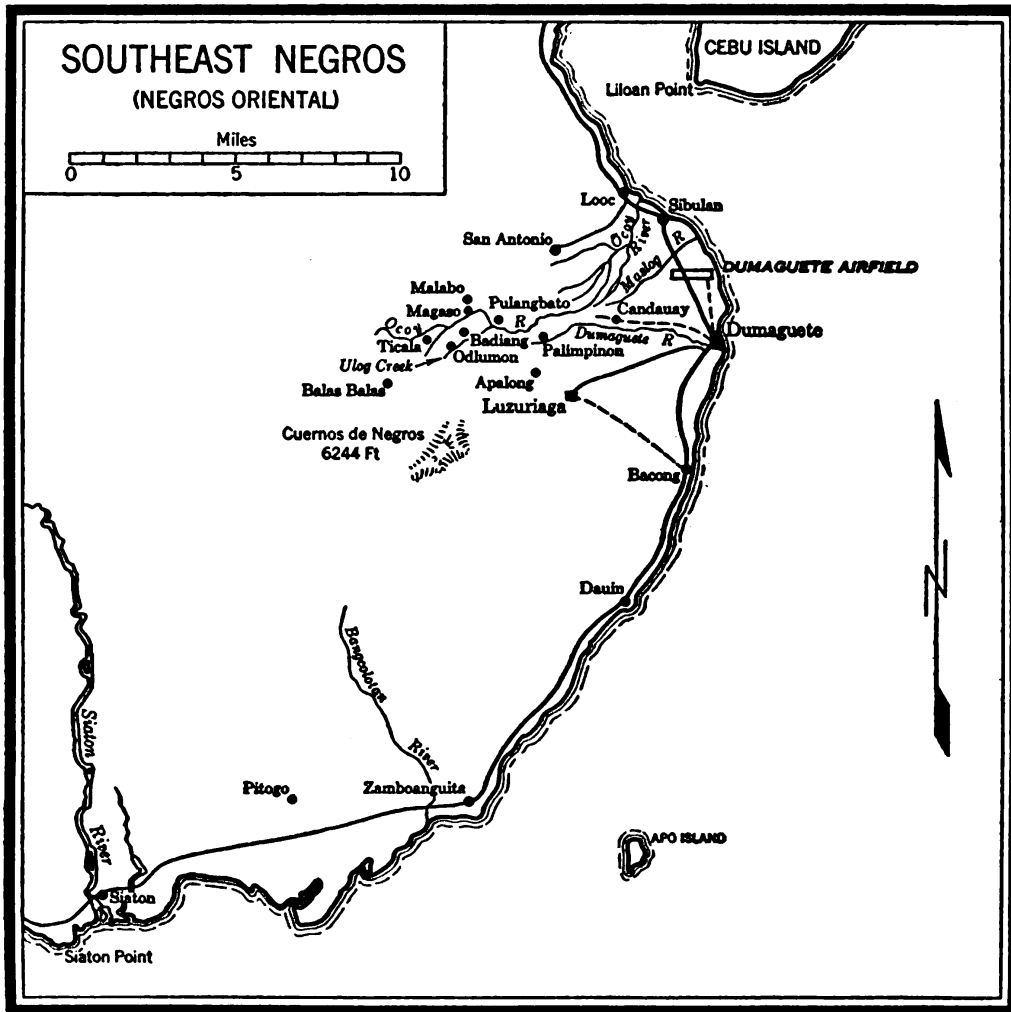
The Japanese forces on Negros, as a whole, had been divided into two groups: one responsible for the province of Negros Occidental, in the west and north; the other responsible for the province of Negros Oriental, in the east and south. It was with this latter group with which the 164th Infantry was now to deal.

Intelligence estimates of the enemy strength in the target area indicated that some eight hundred Japanese troops were known to be centered in or around Dumaguete. A sadly understrength 174th Independent Infantry Battalion, under Col. Satoshi Oie, comprised the garrison's main force. The unit's 2d Company had already locked horns with the North Dakotans' 3d Battalion over on Bohol, and its 3d and 4th Companies had been sent to Palawan months before. All that remained available within the battalion was one combined rifle-light machine gun company, plus a weapons company and a labor company.

The remainder of the enemy garrison, attached to the 174th, consisted of troops of the 5th Airfield Survey and Construction Unit, the 31st Air Training Unit, the 14th Southern Army Hospital and the Visayan Military Police, plus numerous small groups of enemy units evacuated from Cebu, Bohol and other islands in the Philippines.

After the decisive Japanese defeat on Leyte it became apparent to the enemy forces elsewhere in the Visayas that the Philippines could not be held much longer. As was being done on other islands then not under direct U.S. assault, the Japanese commander in Dumaguete ordered defenses prepared in the foothills of rangy, forbidding Cuernos de Negros, near the small mountain *barrios* of Odlumon and Ticala. Combat troops set to work building the required fortifications while service troops, aided by forced Filipino labor, moved tons of supplies and equipment into the hills. But for the evacuation of a small security force, the clearing of the capital was completed just a few days before the landing of the combat team.

Dumaguete airfield, located a short distance north of the city, had, at one time, been an important air installation for the Japanese in the islands. U.S. air attacks in September 1944 virtually eliminated it as an air base when a number of planes were destroyed on the ground. Now covered with long grass, the field was sparsely mined in accordance with original plans to defend it against U.S. ground attacks from the north.



Once on the island, personnel of the 164th were to encounter much greater evidence of local collaboration with the enemy than had been the case in days gone by. The power of the Kempei Tai, the Japanese secret police, and promised rewards and privileges succeeded in obtaining the support of a small percentage of the people around the capital. Most of the collaborationists were eventually captured as the 164th Infantry intensified its drive against the Japanese, but a few managed to remain with the enemy forces in the hills.

The most active of the collaborationists were found to be members of the Japanese Bureau of Constabulary, an organization strikingly similar to the prewar Philippine Constabulary. As it existed in the Dumaguete area, it was made up of fighting and reserve units, both of which were eventually joined under the fighting unit headquarters.

It was later learned that a number of the members of this organization had been gathered from among Filipino prisoners of war taken on

Bataan by the Japanese in the early days of the war. The Japanese had promised them freedom if they would join JBC—freedom to enjoy the “privileges” of serving Hirohito. Many took the chance to be freed from the prison camps, but with the mental provision that they would escape as soon as possible afterwards. Many loyal Filipinos remained in JBC only long enough to learn the aims of the organization and its methods of operation before fleeing into the interior to bring the information to the guerrillas.

Those who remained in JBC turned out to be nothing but local gangsters of sorts, soldiers of fortune and petty criminals who saw in JBC a chance to gain power and influence under the guidance and protection of the Japanese military leaders. Several Constabulary commanders proceeded to establish new codes of morals and ethics. The internment of families of the higher-ranking members, in one instance, brought three wives of one officer into the Dumaguete jail.

Under the Seventh Philippine Military District some thirteen thousand guerrillas served with distinction. Within Negros Oriental Province two divisions had been formed, the 72d and 73d Provisional Infantry Divisions each with four infantry regiments. One of the two divisions, in addition, sported a field artillery regiment, but since the unit lacked howitzers and equipment it was a field artillery unit in name only.

Hampered to a great extent by the mere presence of the enemy on the island, the guerrilla forces lacked much in the way of training and equipment. Furthermore, in order to gain the support of the bulk of the population it proved necessary to make a few political appointments to positions of importance. In some cases, as a result of this, unit commanders were often neither the most experienced nor the most capable. In spite of these difficulties, however, the Filipino forces were able to operate very efficiently when opportunities arose.

With everything ready for the impending assault on Negros and with all troops briefed, the first echelon of the 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team sailed from Cebu City at 2330 on April 25. Three destroyers screened the convoy of landing craft as it moved southward along the eastern shores of Cebu.

By dawn the following morning the vessels were almost in position to initiate the landing operations. One destroyer headed south prepared to shell Dumaguete or to fire on targets of opportunity located by an L-5 flying overhead. By 0800 the landing craft had turned shoreward and the dash to the beach was under way.

Fifteen minutes later the first riflemen of the 164th Infantry's 1st

Battalion began wading ashore from LCIs through shoulder-deep water with rifles and ammunition held high. No opposition was encountered on the guerrilla-secured beachhead as the leading elements of the battalion hurried over the sand to a point across the adjacent coastal highway before regrouping.

In an effort now to straighten out the plans, the regimental commander, the commander of the 1st Battalion and the rifle company commanders drove to Sibulan, a mile and a half to the southeast, to confer with guerrilla officers. Here the local situation was thoroughly discussed and regimental intelligence officers picked up new information concerning the Japanese.

Also present at the conference was an officer from the 40th Reconnaissance Troop (40th Infantry Division), who had just completed an armored reconnaissance southward along the east coast of Negros from the northern end of the island. On March 23 the 40th Division had invaded Negros Occidental Province and had been in action against the Japanese in that area since that time. By means of this physical contact, the commander of the 40th Division, Maj. Gen. Rapp Brush, could get a first-hand report of the situation in the 164th Infantry's zone of action.

As the first elements of the North Dakota regiment came ashore near Looc, guerrilla forces attacked a group of enemy positions close to the Maslog River, two thousand yards below Sibulan. Late on the previous afternoon Filipino patrols noticed activity around a series of emplacements on the Maslog's south bank. The attack which was now being made was designed to clear the area of all enemy resistance so that U.S. forces might be free to drive on through to Dumaguete. Opposition to the guerrilla attack consisted solely of a brief flurry of mortar fire which ended almost as quickly as it had begun.

At 1010 the push toward Dumaguete swung into motion as the 1st Battalion passed through the Filipino lines and headed south along the main highway below Sibulan. Patrols crossed the Maslog River and quickly secured the bridge. Leaving a small detachment to guard the span, the main body of the battalion fanned out on both sides of the road and continued south. By 1315 Dumaguete airfield was reported secure as the drive gained momentum.

At the airfield troops encountered the first and only minefield the Japanese forces were known to have laid in southern Negros. It consisted mainly of 75mm and 15cm shells improvised to serve as mines, all of which were rather poorly camouflaged. The pattern of shells hardly slowed the rapid Americal Division advance.

A short time later the advance scouts of the battalion cautiously entered the outskirts of Dumaguete. Having been warned a number of times of the possible presence of mines and booby traps within the capital, the infantrymen explored every street and vacant house carefully. In time, however, only four other improvised mines were found and disarmed within the city limits.

As the landing took shape during the morning up at Looc, an L-5, slightly larger and faster than a Cub, circled over the convoy, reporting signs of Japanese fleeing out a dirt road leading west into the hills. The plane's observer also reported several fires within the city, presumably started by an enemy security detachment left behind on a mission of destruction. When the riflemen reached Dumaguete later in the afternoon of April 26 they found only a few smoldering ruins in an otherwise undamaged city, mute evidence of a weak Japanese attempt to destroy a community they could not hold by force.

Thinking that the Japanese garrison would carry out a wholesale program of destruction, civilians had fled from the city in large numbers. Seeing now that the capital was being secured by U.S. troops, the people began to stream back from the countryside as the 1st Battalion pushed southward. Not just a few of the older men and women were so impressed with the kindly manner of the liberators that they dropped to their knees on the hard pavement and wept with joy.

Hardly pausing to admire the city which they had just taken, 1st Battalion scouts continued on through to the north bank of the Dumaguete River, only to find that the bridge had been destroyed. Guerrilla forces, holding a line on the south bank, at first thought the troops across from them were Japanese and opened fire without hesitation. The surprising development caused some confusion on both sides, but the identity of the U.S. troops came to light before any harm had been done.

By 1630 the regimental commander was able to report by radio to Americal Division headquarters back on Cebu that the city of Dumaguete had been taken. A perimeter around the town was quickly set up as the combat team headquarters moved in. Battery B, 245th Field Artillery, occupied gun positions on the grounds of Silliman University, followed by elements of the 164th Infantry's Cannon Company.

Meanwhile, after its landing at Looc, the North Dakotans' 2d Battalion swung inland along a winding dirt road leading to San Antonio. After reaching the tiny *barrio* at 1200, the battalion turned directly south and moved across open country. Pushing on across the Ocoy River, advance elements of the force cut the Dumaguete-Candaуay road in

the late afternoon. The first minor skirmish of the operations developed later when small-arms and automatic-weapons fire was exchanged with a group of enemy fleeing westward into the hills.

Nightfall found the 2d Battalion inside a perimeter at Palimpinon, eight thousand yards west of Dumaguete, after an impressive nine-thousand-yard drive down from the Looc beachhead. Before dark the commander of the 2d Battalion, Lt. Col. Veon M. McConnell, ordered two roadblocks set up on the extension of the road to Candauay in an effort to halt the withdrawal of any Japanese forces in the immediate area.

Near midnight the first enemy counter-thrust took shape. A small force of Japanese attempted to infiltrate through the 2d Battalion perimeter, but alert riflemen beat back the assault in short order. At dawn on the next morning security patrols found fourteen bodies outside the lines, two of which were identified as those of Filipino members of the Japanese Bureau of Constabulary. In addition, one badly wounded native, also thought to be a member of the Constabulary, was found and taken to the rear for treatment and interrogation.

Efforts to force the Japanese into one major fight began in earnest on the morning of April 27 when the 2d Battalion turned west from Palimpinon and headed straight for the hills beyond. Leading elements of the battalion quickly secured the end of the Dumaguete-Candauay road extension in one brief skirmish. Four enemy were encountered on a group of trucks and were immediately taken under fire. One wounded Japanese was captured as his three companions fled into the underbrush. Elsewhere in the area Company E met and killed eight stray Japanese on a small trail.

As Company E attempted to cross the Ocoy River once again and move up the valley below the rugged hills, Japanese machine-gun and mortar fire halted the men. Scouts determined the source of the fire, after which the company withdrew a short distance to allow an artillery concentration to be laid on the target. By dark the 2d Battalion as a whole was able to report an average company advance of 1,500 yards as the lower slopes of the first ridges were reached.

Meanwhile the 1st Battalion, operating for the day out of the Dumaguete perimeter, scoured the plains to the west of the capital. Many abandoned positions were located and large stores of supplies and equipment were found. But the area was completely free of the enemy.

As a result, it was deduced that virtually all of the Japanese garri-

son in the province had moved up into the hills west of the capital prior to or during the landings at Looc on the previous morning. It now became evident that the 164th Infantry would be required to carry the fight up into terrain that was certainly not advantageous to the regiment. By any standards, this minor campaign was to be a long and arduous one. Yet plans were unhesitatingly made for a drive against the makeshift Japanese bastions which would force the hostile troops to fight and die in position or withdraw into the unexplored, forbidding interior which even the natives shunned.

Foreseeing the need for the utmost in facilities for treating the casualties which were to be expected, medical officers of the combat team, by the evening of April 27, had moved into Silliman University's hospital, once occupied by the Japanese, to begin setting up a 200-bed installation. Evacuation plans called for the movement of routine cases back to Cebu by water and for emergency cases to be flown back in stretcher-fitted L-5s.

A definite plan of action was now drawn up in the combat team headquarters in Dumaguete, a plan which called for the use of guerrilla forces. Filipinos in control of the *barrio* of Malabo, thirteen thousand yards west of Dumaguete, were to prevent any attempted enemy withdrawal to the north or northwest. Others around Luzuriaga were to halt Japanese movements to the south. Pressure applied by the two available battalions of the 164th would prevent any determined Japanese push back to the east. Behind the enemy to the west there remained only the heavily forested hills.

Within the 164th Infantry a two-battalion front was now to be set up with the 1st Battalion on the left, attacking west and southwest from Apolong, just above Luzuriaga, and the 2d Battalion on the right, making its main effort to the southwest from a point near the south bank of the Ocoy River. All of the preliminary attacks and maneuvers were carried out on April 28 as the troops moved into position.

On the morning of April 28 the second echelon of the combat team edged up to the Dumaguete pier to unload personnel, supplies and equipment from the convoy of LSMs. Battery C, 245th Field Artillery, hauled its quartet of howitzers out of the landing craft, hurried them through the streets of the capital and ran them into positions near a new area occupied by Battery B north of the road near Candauay. The 221st Field Artillery's Battery C followed close behind to offer the support of the heavy 155mm howitzers for the operations now to be undertaken.

The next morning, April 29, found attacking companies of both the

1st and 2d Battalions shoving off swiftly toward initial objectives. In the only significant action during the day Companies F and G recorded slight gains in an attack against a ridge just east of Ulog Creek. An unestimated number of enemy opened up with small-arms and machine-gun fire to halt the drive short of the crest of the ridge and then proceeded to fend off continued efforts to take the objective.

Showing evidence of what was to become a standard pattern of behavior for them, the Japanese, on the morning of April 30, abandoned the positions in front of Company F just before a new attack was to be launched. The company secured the ridge and halted to allow Company E to pass through and press on toward other Japanese positions to the southwest. Automatic-weapons fire halted this new thrust at first, but Company E finally ground out slight gains as a half-dozen enemy were slain. M-7s of Cannon Company, using direct fire from a vantage point in the rear, helped out by destroying six key pillboxes.

It could now be seen that the Japanese were wisely allowing the North Dakotans to do most of the maneuvering in this very young campaign. Heavily eroded terrain, deep gullies and narrow ridges gave the enemy ample opportunity to delay the U.S. advance by sparingly employing small groups of soldiers in positions dominating the terrain below. A mere handful of men could, and often did, halt the advance of an entire battalion.

The narrow fingers stretching outward and downward from the Cuernos de Negros made it virtually impossible to commit more than one rifle company in direct assaults. More often than not, assault elements of single companies could not be deployed to any great extent. The possibility of flanking enemy positions by movements through the deep gullies was explored and cast aside when it was found that scattered Japanese had the ridges covered from all sides.

Such were the difficulties now imposed upon the 164th Infantry in these operations. There were no means available to force the Japanese to come out and fight; the North Dakotans could only make the best of the situation and move in to make the enemy fight or withdraw.

Driving forward with new vigor on May 1, Company E, supported by fire from Company G behind them, succeeded in securing the first main ridge in the Cuernos de Negros foothills. Advance elements of the regiment were now two thousand yards west of Sagbang.

After taking the objective against only moderate resistance, Company E was suddenly subjected to the first in a series of fifteen Japanese counterattacks which filled the remainder of the day. Small groups of

enemy thrust at the hasty company perimeter time and time again with increasing frequency. Finally, Company G was sent forward under intermittent enemy small-arms fire to join with and reinforce the beleaguered Company E. Late in the afternoon, after the fifteenth assault was beaten back, security patrols from both companies found twenty-nine dead Japanese around the hill.

Taking into consideration the results of a detailed aerial reconnaissance of the area and those of the first strong contacts made in the 2d Battalion sector, the regimental commander now hit upon a new plan of operation. Under this new scheme, the 1st Battalion was withdrawn from the left flank of the front and ordered back to Luzuriaga. From Luzuriaga Companies B and C were shifted by truck through Dumaguete up to Looc and back down to the southwest to San Antonio, the *barrio* taken by the 2d Battalion on April 26.

On the morning of May 1 the major elements of the 1st Battalion continued on foot to the *barrio* of Malabo, held now by guerrilla forces. From this small plain just north of the Ocoy River, the battalion was to attack south across the river and up over the ridges further up the river from the 2d Battalion zone of action. Each of the battalion's rifle companies was reinforced by one heavy machine-gun section from Company D, by thirty guerrilla soldiers and twenty-five Filipino carriers.

In order to offer more efficient support for the 1st Battalion, Battery B, 245th Field Artillery, was displaced from Candauay to new positions on a ridge 1,500 yards northeast of Pulangbato on May 1. Battery C, meanwhile, was shoved forward to new positions a short distance southwest of Palimpinon. Registrations of both displaced batteries were completed on May 2.

The 245th's two L-4s had now reached the island and had set up a base at Dumaguete airfield. From dawn until about 0800 each day and from about 1700 until dusk, the target area was clear of overhanging clouds which would otherwise make flying difficult and dangerous. It was during these hours in the morning and late afternoon that much of the vitally necessary reconnaissance and adjustment-of-fire missions were flown in the days to come. At other times when the area was clear of clouds, pilots and observers were hurried into the skies to take advantage of the excellent observation.

It was not until the morning of May 3 that the 1st Battalion struck across the Ocoy River from the north in earnest. Scattered opposition met the advance as the infantrymen worked up the ridges through and beyond Badiang. Northwest of Odlumon, Company B was halted tempo-

rarily by a stubborn Japanese pillbox from which at least two automatic weapons were being fired. To the west late in the afternoon, Company A reported running into increasingly strong enemy resistance from a series of well prepared positions.

Small-scale attacks, supported at intervals by fire from Battery B of the 245th Field Artillery, continued throughout the 1st Battalion's sector until the following evening. By this time Company B had practically cleared all the hills around Odlumon. In the meantime, patrols in the 2d Battalion's zone scouted new Japanese positions in preparation for a resumption of the drive upward into the rain forests.

After several days marked with a lack of success in thrusts against steadfast enemy defenses, Company A, on May 5, broke contact with the Japanese on the west end of the battalion line and pulled back. Swinging back through Magaso, just below Malabo, the company turned back up into the hills in the direction of Badiang.

After several days of intense scouting and patrolling Company G struck hard at Japanese positions on a narrow ridge near the source of Ulog Creek on the morning of May 5. Two platoons smashed forward in an attempt to drive the Japanese from the emplacements, but both were turned back. Later in the day one of the two platoons failed in a flanking maneuver that was met by extremely heavy mortar and machine-gun fire. Again on the next day the attacks were repeated with similar results, but the attacking forces did manage to get within fifty yards of the objective before withdrawing to safer ground.

Seeing now that the entire 2d Battalion would be held up by these stubborn enemy forces, an air strike was requested through the detachment of the 592d Joint Assault Signal Company working with the regiment. In answer to the call a dozen P-38s roared in over the area on the morning of May 7 to bomb and strafe the target. All available artillery and mortar fire was subsequently turned against the emplacements as Company G moved into position. As the fire lifted, the company pushed up the slopes, quickly killed four Japanese and secured the objective almost without effort.

After Company G's first attack on May 5 the opposing Japanese felt that they might be much more secure in their positions if they could only destroy some of the artillery which had been making life rather miserable for them. Consequently, they chose as the most likely target an M7 which had been firing from positions which they could plainly see 2,200 yards to the northeast. Early on the morning of May 6 a small infiltration party succeeded in reaching the edge of the lines near the

position occupied by the M7. Hurriedly dropping a satchel charge in the area, they fled into the darkness of the night under cover of the confusion caused by the explosion. Unknown to them, however, the self-propelled 105 had been moved and in its place had been parked a jeep assigned to an artillery liaison officer working with the 2d Battalion. The plan was good since it resulted in the complete destruction of the vehicle, but the M7 survived to continue adding to the misery of the Japanese.

While Company G was attempting to pound its way into the well defended area, troops of the 1st Battalion scored new gains off to the northwest and west. On May 6 Company A, moving up a narrow ridge leading to Badiang, ground out an advance of more than five hundred yards against scattered light opposition. During the same day Company B moved forward with little difficulty, but Company C, to the north of Badiang, recorded only slight gains against a combination of moderate resistance and formidable terrain.

As the pressure on the Japanese was being increased, Company A struck forward again on the next morning. Heavy enemy defensive fire halted the advance after only a few yards had been gained and finally forced the company to withdraw to safer ground. Throughout the remainder of the afternoon and well into the night the Japanese poured intense concentrations of all types of fire on the company.

During the night of May 7 the Japanese cut the supply and communications line between Company A's Weapons Platoon and the remainder of the company. When he learned this, Sgt. George C. Kibler, of West Allis, Wisconsin, volunteered to lead a small group of men back down the hill to reestablish contact. Meanwhile, the Weapons Platoon itself was ambushed as it attempted to rejoin the company, but the Sergeant leaped into action on his own initiative. Without orders, Kibler led an attack against the ambush, personally killed several of the enemy and drove the rest off into the darkness. His actions, carried out under extreme pressure and under the most adverse conditions, resulting in the restoration of the supply and communications line, extricated his platoon from a precarious situation.

During the early morning hours of May 8 an unestimated number of Japanese hurled themselves at the Company A lines. Meeting fire with fire as the attack developed, the infantrymen ground the enemy drive to a halt and subsequently threw back the surviving Japanese. By dawn quiet had settled over the area as the North Dakotans prepared to move out after the defeated attackers.

The rash of Japanese attacks now spread over to the 2d Battalion's zone on the night of May 8. Shortly before midnight a powerful enemy force unleashed a strong blow against Company G on positions on the ridge taken the previous day. Seemingly trying every trick in the book during the hour-long attack, the Japanese struck at the company's lines time and again without success. The darkness masked the total cost to the Japanese, but it was reported that six enemy were known to have been killed.

On the following night, on the right flank of the 2d Battalion 1,200 yards north of Company G's positions, Company F was subjected to the first in a series of determined enemy attacks designed to regain control of the ridge along which one prong of the multi-fingered 164th Infantry advance was being pushed. Over a period of three successive nights Company F ably turned back no less than twelve strong thrusts against its perimeter. Wave after wave of fanatical enemy, appearing as if from nowhere, threw themselves at the positions. Rifles, machine guns, light and heavy mortars and bangalore torpedoes were continually employed in an effort to drive a wedge into the company's lines. By morning of May 12, when peace had at last come to the sector, men of the tired company were able to report that fifty-seven Japanese had been slain.

By noon of May 11 a general regimental advance was progressing more satisfactorily as all three rifle companies of the 1st Battalion and Company G of the 2d reported substantial early gains against light to moderate resistance. Broadly speaking, the 164th Infantry's lines now extended in an east-west direction, facing the enemy to the south in the 1st Battalion's sector and to the southwest in that of the 2d Battalion. The plan of action called for the Japanese to be contained in the hills, backed against high and rugged Cuernos de Negros, and to be annihilated by a series of sustained drives up into the rain forests.

To counter this the Japanese had only two choices. They could prolong their inevitable doom by resisting the 164th's advance by taking advantage of the terrain. Or, they could accept fate under the sustained pressure of the North Dakotans and withdraw in a body or in small groups into the interior.

In these early days of the operations it seemed as though the Japanese might have chosen the first course. Counterattacks in both battalion sectors might well have been an important part of their defense plan. However, as time passed it became evident that the enemy had chosen the second alternative, leaving behind rear-guard detachments to protect

the withdrawal-by-stages. But the determination with which the Japanese were resisting the advance indicated that the two alternatives might have been combined.

By now the forward elements of both battalions of the 164th were moving up into the rain forests. These dense, jungle-like masses of vegetation covered much of the high ground at elevations above 2,500 feet. Low clouds hung over the zones of action during much of each day, adding an eerie tenseness to the situation. Dark, damp nights spent on constantly muddy ground were now to become routine once again for the veterans of Guadalcanal and Bougainville. Forward movement was to become a battle against three elements: the Japanese, the steepness of the narrow ridges, and the slippery, slimy muck. Despite these difficulties, progress continued slow and steady through the remaining days of the month.

After making contact with troops of Company A eight hundred yards southeast of Odlumon on May 12, Company B swung to the right and drove southwest. By the morning of May 17 the company was in position to attack enemy positions eight hundred yards southeast of Ticala after a gain of more than a thousand yards. Progress was now held to but a few precious yards as one platoon unsuccessfully attempted to circle the hostile left flank.

On the next morning, in the wake of a heavy mortar and artillery preparation men of Company B attacked the stubborn enemy positions again, but no significant successes were recorded. Reconnaissance showed that the Japanese had constructed a solid semicircle of pillboxes which more than adequately protected the perimeter from attacks from any direction.

By May 20 Company A had taken over the assaults as the tired riflemen of Company B pulled back to reorganize. In spite of the fact that the emplacements had become targets for extremely heavy concentrations of mortar and artillery fire, the Japanese who occupied them still resisted fiercely every new attempt to force a withdrawal. The next morning, however, Company A managed to penetrate the defenses with a determined assault and soon reported having moved three hundred yards on up the ridge beyond the line.

Meanwhile, in the 2d Battalion sector, Company F scored some important gains on its own ridge line as bazookas were brought into action to assist in a two-hundred-yard advance. On May 22 additional ground was gained as Japanese resistance faltered in the area.

Taking advantage of the staggering blow dealt the Japanese on the

previous day, Company A on May 22 struck forward again and drove 150 yards before halting in the face of increasingly intense enemy fire. Attempts to flank the newly discovered positions failed shortly before the Japanese counterpressure forced the company to yield the ground gained.

In the meantime, on the ridge south of the headwaters of Ulog Creek, Company G engaged thirty Japanese in a bitter fight, but failed to dislodge the enemy forces in some cunningly prepared positions. Plans were made to strike again next day.

In the action around Ulog Creek during the day of May 22, Sgt. Jerome D. Gazler, of Chicago, exposed himself to intense and deadly enemy fire to enable his company to gain ground. When Japanese machine-gun and sniper fire from a series of caves in the vicinity held up the advance of his platoon in mid-morning, Gazler moved out alone and proceeded to clean out the caves one by one. Without assistance from anyone, other than those providing supporting fire to his rear, the intrepid sergeant tossed hand grenades and fired into each of the caves in turn. Little by little the enemy fire slackened and eventually was so feeble and ineffective that Gazler's platoon was able to complete its mission with much less risk.

On the morning of May 23 a flight of fourteen P-38s zoomed down over the target area to pound at key enemy troop concentrations marked with smoke by the 245th Field Artillery. Napalm fire bombs fell among the dense jungles above the scenes of action; some started large fires and others burned themselves out quickly in the midst of the dense, damp undergrowth.

Disregarding the battalion boundary line, Company F, in cooperation with Company B, attacked a group of stoutly defended positions in an area about a thousand yards south of Odlumon. Mutually supporting one another, the two companies quickly pierced the enemy lines and proceeded to mop up the area before reporting it secure.

By now all assault companies committed to action were pushing closer to a juncture of all the main ridge lines at a point four thousand feet above sea level, the capture of which would place the 164th Infantry's forward elements some 2,200 yards south of Ticala. On the morning of May 25 nearing the juncture of the ridges now termed the regimental objective, Company B struck hard at an intermediary objective a thousand yards south of Ticala. Taking the target with ease under the supporting fire of Company F, Company B added another five hundred yards before the forward elements of the company halted within 150 yards of the fringe

of the regimental objective. In the meantime, Company C moved into the immediate area from the northwest without incident.

On the next morning Company B hammered at the objective after a heavy artillery and mortar bombardment had shaken the area. Intense fire from well sited, mutually supporting positions near the crest of the ridge joint halted the thrust and turned it back. Later in the morning the company struck again without success. Twice more during the afternoon the reports were the same, but in one of the latter assaults forward elements of the company managed to push forward to within fifty yards of the pillboxes before the Japanese counterpressure forced them to pull back.

During the day Company C scored quietly as it sneaked to within two hundred yards of the objective. By dark the company was in position to strike at the objective from the northwest on the following morning.

Shortly after dawn on May 27 Companies B and C lashed out at the stubborn Japanese in a new, two-pronged drive against the regimental objective. Once again, in spite of the added pressure being brought to bear from the northwest by Company C, the enemy countered with a full array of automatic weapons, rifles, grenades, and light mortars to stall the North Dakotans' attacks. Bound by the precipitous terrain, the assault companies could only beat against the positions by frontal assaults in each sector. Not even the most strenuous efforts seemed to budge the Japanese lines. Darkness finally halted the day's activities without a significant gain having been scored.

Every available mortar, cannon and howitzer was turned toward the objective on the morning of May 28 in an effort to break the enemy's will to resist by a heavy preparatory barrage. In the wake of this earth-shaking fire the two companies struck forward again, moving cautiously up the narrow, tortuous trails toward the crest of the ridge system. Strangely enough, once the booming of the mortars and artillery died down all was quiet on the hill.

Riflemen hurried up to and through the positions, exploring each pillbox carefully. Security patrols from Company B found and killed two Japanese in the area as three other dead enemy were discovered inside the ring of positions.

With the regimental objective now safe in the hands of the 164th Infantry, organized Japanese resistance in Negros Oriental seemed to be broken. The thirty-three-day struggle to seize this key terrain feature has cost the North Dakotans heavily, but, by the same token, it had

cost the Japanese even more. As a result of this sustained drive up through some of the most difficult and forbidding ground yet encountered, the enemy strength was almost entirely spent. Enemy resources and supplies were all but gone. There now remained, it was thought, only scattered bands of Japanese incapable of determined stands against the still-strong troops of the 164th Infantry.

The capture of the regimental objective brought the Americal's Assistant Division Commander, Brig. Gen. Eugene W. Ridings, to Dumaguete for a tactical conference with the commander of the 164th. Late in the afternoon on May 28 plans were discussed which called for the complete annihilation of the remaining Japanese in the province. Intelligence reports were reviewed and interrogations of prisoners of war and of Filipino civilians who had escaped from the Japanese were digested.

It was now decided, taking into consideration all available intelligence reports and a knowledge of the terrain, that the surviving Japanese had a choice of but three courses to follow in avoiding contact with the American forces.

To avoid contact altogether, the Japanese could now move directly into the unexplored interior west and northwest of Cuernos de Negros, but death from disease or starvation would most certainly face them in this area.

It was thought that the enemy, in an attempt to obtain sorely needed food, might cross the island through this dense, mountainous jungle, following which they might scour the sector along the western shores below Tolong. In this general area the foothills closely matched those over which the 164th Infantry had just struggled. Numerous small peaks offered excellent defensive positions from which observation of wide zones of the island might be maintained.

More readily, however, the Japanese might attempt to move south by skirting to the east of Cuernos de Negros and heading for Siaton, at the southern tip of the island. This possibility was brought to light during an interrogation of a civilian who had escaped from the Japanese headquarters in the hills a few days before.

The possibility of an enemy withdrawal northward was discounted earlier when it was considered that much of the pressure of the Japanese positions had been brought down from this direction. In addition, it was known that the terrain off to the north was far more open and that the Japanese would most probably take advantage of routes which would offer more natural cover and concealment.

Fundamentally, then, in an attempt to move from the area and to avoid contact with the Americans and the guerrillas, the Japanese could move west toward the Tolong area or south toward Siaton. The question now arose as to which plan the Japanese actually chose. Or did the enemy break up into small groups with the intention of letting each group choose for itself?

On May 29, in compliance with instructions issued by General Ridings, Companies B and F were alerted for movement into the Siaton sector. Companies E and G were ordered to prepare for a shore-to-shore movement around the tip of the island to the west coast. The 164th Infantry was now ready to cope with each possibility.

A rapid, one-day reconnaissance of the roads which skirted the southern shores of Negros preceded the movements on May 30. With but few exceptions the roads were found to be passable along the southeastern coast from Dumaguete to Siaton. From Siaton around to Tolong, however, up to the southwestern coast, the narrow coastal highway was found to be overgrown in many parts, yet still generally passable. However, since many bridges had either been destroyed or had just plain worn out, bamboo rafts, tended by natives, were needed to ferry the jeep-borne reconnaissance party across nine different streams and rivers beyond Siaton.

Moving by truck from Dumaguete on June 1, Company F was dispatched to Siaton with orders to patrol northward up the Siaton River. On the next day a later change in plans brought Company G to Zamboanguita for a series of patrols up the Bangcolotan River. On June 2, Company E landed at Cautitan Point with the mission of scouting both sides of the Nagbalaye River to the east. The latter company was reinforced on the following day by Battery C of the 245th Field Artillery as Battery B of the same battalion moved to Pitogo, near Zamboanguita, to support Company G.

Meanwhile, actions around the recently taken regimental objective had not entirely come to a halt. Guerrilla units of the Filipino 77th Infantry, on May 29, contacted and overpowered a small group of Japanese in positions a thousand yards northwest of the ridge joint and killed four.

After a three-day rest in Dumaguete, Company B returned to the hills on June 1 to relieve Company C, coordinating its patrols with those of Company A. Two days later Company B found itself back in the thick of action as it attacked a group of determined Japanese located a thousand yards southwest of the old regimental objective. The Japa-

nese, rested also after several days free from contacts with the Americans, put up a stiff fight and succeeded in halting the advance thirty yards short of their positions.

Attacks against the Japanese die-hards continued virtually unabated through June 6 as Company A and a platoon from Company C moved in to reinforce Company B. The terrain and the almost perpetual rains in the rain forests four thousand feet above sea level hampered operations as much as did the opposition offered by the enemy. Progress was slowed to a mere inching forward. Casualties were inflicted on the enemy in ones and twos.

By the morning of June 8 nearly all elements of the 2d Battalion had been recalled to Dumaguete from the widespread patrol assignments to the south and southwest. Both batteries of the 245th Field Artillery moved back into the provincial capital before taking up new missions. One platoon from Company E, meanwhile, remained at Cautitan Point, combing the area until June 10.

Reconnaissance in the 1st Battalion sector now indicated that the enemy was firmly established in positions on the crest of a high ridge to the southwest of the old regimental objective. Attacks made in the midst of thundering artillery barrages were repeatedly turned back. So important an artillery target had this objective now become that infantrymen and artillerymen alike referred to it as concentration 469, the numerical designation given it by the S-3 of the 245th.

After having relieved Company B on June 11, Company G added freshness to the operations as important gains were scored in new attacks on the objective. Company F was sent into the area on June 13 and by the evening of the next day further gains of significance had been made and consolidated.

In a local attack in the objective area on June 12 a 164th Infantry rifle platoon ran into such heavy enemy fire that it was forced to withdraw after suffering a half-dozen casualties. One of those hurt was Pfc. William H. Dailey, of Shooting Creek, North Carolina, who was first wounded by an enemy hand grenade and then blown over a twelve-foot cliff by the impact of the explosion. After he had rolled an additional twenty yards down the steep bank and despite the painful wounds in his neck and left arm, Dailey, an acting squad leader, rejoined his unit, supervised the evacuation of casualties, and saw to it that his squad was safely withdrawn.

Once new preparatory fires lifted, Companies A, F and G and a platoon from Company C all moved forward toward concentration 469

on June 15. Although intense enemy defensive fire rained down on the assault forces, the North Dakotans, this time, were not to be denied. By mid-afternoon, after hours of the most bitter fighting of the campaign, the determined infantrymen poked a hole in the Japanese defenses.

Pouring men through the breach in the line, the assault companies quickly mopped up the last of the Japanese in the area. Twenty-five dead were found among the ruins caused by the tremendous preparatory fires laid on the hill during the persistent attacks of the 164th Infantry. Troops wasted little time digging in when it was thought that the Japanese might attempt one last strong counterattack.

The capture of this last stronghold marked the final appearance of Japanese in any strength in the area. Only three more enemy were found and killed up to June 19. Combat team intelligence officers, however, examining captured records and reports, estimated that nearly three hundred Japanese probably remained alive in the southern end of Negros. But since none were to be found, it was assumed that the enemy had fled into the interior to avoid contact with U.S. forces while searching for the means to survive.

By this time, in Negros Occidental, the 503d Parachute Infantry Regimental Combat Team had relieved the 40th Infantry Division of all tactical operations in northwestern Negros. On June 22 the 503d's zone of responsibility was extended to include that now under control of the 164th Infantry. On this same day reinforced Company G, 503d Parachute Infantry, arrived in Dumaguete to take over the entire sector.

On the morning of June 24 the last elements of the 164th Infantry departed from Dumaguete in LSMs for Cebu City to rejoin the remainder of the Americal Division. This terminated what had turned out to be a long and arduous operation against a most crafty enemy, but one during which U.S. power and ingenuity, as well as the determined spirit of the infantrymen, spelled doom for the Japanese.

During the sixty-day operation in Negros Oriental 527 Japanese had been killed. Seventeen others were taken prisoner but of these seventeen, four managed to escape. The 164th Infantry and its attached units suffered 33 killed in action and 179 wounded.

With this operation and with the activities on Bohol weeks earlier, the sector of responsibility assigned the Americal Division in the Visayas had been completely consolidated. A well deserved rest lay ahead.

Showdown

THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF ALL PHASES OF VICTOR II now more than earned for the Americal Division its first real rest period since its arrival in the Philippines in late January 1945. By July 1, after the last elements of the 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team had returned to Cebu from Negros, all units of the Division were at last joined in one relatively closely knit base camp for the first time since Bougainville. As it was to turn out, however, the rest period proved far too short for the Division's veterans.

Along the shores of the Camotes Sea, near Silut Lagoon, the command posts of the Division and Division Artillery were now established. To the west, the northwest and the southwest, on both sides of the main coastal highway, combat and service troops hurried to set up the new unit camps as quickly as possible in order to take advantage of the rest period.

Signal Corps wire crews labored to complete the necessary telephone circuits to all units. Engineer crews bulldozed and scraped miles of new roads leading into regimental and battalion bivouacs. Quartermaster officers and men struggled to get new shipments of fresh foods to all units. The rest period, such as it was, seemed only to entail much harder work than ever for all.

Through the Army's Philippine Civil Affairs units attached to the Americal, Filipino laborers were hired by the score to help construct the camps. Native-style huts soon dotted the Division's bivouac area. Other crews of native workmen cleared undergrowth around installations and dug drainage ditches to fight malaria-bearing mosquitoes.

Before many weeks all basic comforts of overseas life had been provided. Improvements in unit areas continued for some time after this, but most of the latter changes were made through the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the men themselves.

Among the basic comforts of life, the familiar open-air theater ranked

high. Many outfits found adjacent hillsides ideal for the fulfillment of this recreational need. In time many luxurious amphitheaters were to be found around the countryside. The Division's special service office quickly established regular movie schedules.

Meanwhile, the offices of the Americal's G-2 and G-3 were busy preparing a summary of what had taken place since March 26 when the first elements of the 132d and 182d Infantry Regiments stepped ashore at Talisay. Due for summarization, too, were the activities of the 164th Infantry on Bohol and Negros. Now to be determined were the over-all results of these combat operations, the effects of the American attacks on the Japanese and the final estimates of what might be remaining in enemy strength in the sector of the Visayas in which the Americal had fought.

On Cebu and Bohol and in Negros Oriental, according to word from G-2's office, the Japanese had little choice but to fight a series of defensive actions. U.S. domination of enemy lines of communication and supply had cut off these garrisons completely. Yet, in most cases, isolated as they were, the Japanese stubbornly defended thoughtfully prepared positions in the face of the most intense U.S. offensive pressure.

On Cebu the Japanese, before the Americal's landing, had to choose whether they would defend the Talisay beachhead. Enemy troops had gone to a great deal of trouble preparing an extremely elaborate set of defenses, which, if properly manned, might well have made the landing a most costly one for the Division.

In the hills behind the provincial capital far-sighted Japanese commanders had prepared a truly intricate system of pillboxes which enabled the enemy to postpone complete U.S. success for more than three weeks. The same was true to a lesser degree in the ridges west of Dumaguete, capital of Negros Oriental, where a small enemy garrison made excellent use of rugged terrain in fending off attacks of the 164th Infantry.

Only rarely did the Japanese, during the three-month Victor II campaign, attempt to turn back the Americal's steady advances by abortive banzai charges in the night. Knowing full well that theirs was primarily a battle against time, enemy unit commanders wisely husbanded troops in order to hold off U.S. forces as long as possible.

Taken as a whole, the Americal Division, between March 26 and June 24, liberated the islands of Cebu and Bohol and the major portion of the province of Negros Oriental, as well as a number of smaller

islands within the broad operational area. Probably more than a million inhabitants of these islands could thank men of the Division for their freedom from the menace of the Japanese.

Of paramount importance to the strategic picture in the Philippines at the moment was the fact that Cebu City itself was now available for use as a staging area for future operations against the Japanese. It was already a foregone conclusion that new and more powerful strikes were yet to be made closer to the heart of the dwindling Japanese Empire. With this in mind, therefore, Cebu's docks were cleared of debris and its channels were cleared of wreckage. Ruined buildings near the docks were now being razed and bulldozed aside as storage dumps were being set up.

Along with the grim task of meeting and overwhelming the enemy in actual combat in the Visayas, the Americal Division assumed the task of caring for the civilian population. Just as had innocent people in other parts of the world, the Filipinos had suffered much during the enemy occupation and during the heavy fighting which was necessary to drive the Japanese from the key cities and towns.

A pair of Philippine Civil Affairs units accompanied the Division ashore at Talisay and quickly set to work tending to the needs of the population. At first food and medicines were supplied to alleviate the sufferings of the people. Later, when the tactical situation permitted, educational and political aid was extended. Under the direction of these units of specially trained Army officers and men, Filipinos were hired to perform many worthwhile jobs in general support of the Americal's activities. To some extent the wages earned by the natives helped to bolster the Islands' faltering economy.

Still later, damaged schools were repaired and opened; teachers were rounded up and sent back to work. Hospitals, stripped by the Japanese, were re-equipped and placed in operation. In cooperation with local civilian authorities, controls were established over food supplies, clothing, medicines and other vital civilian needs in an effort to stamp out flourishing black markets.

For the first time, therefore, the Americal Division was required to cope directly with such civilian problems even while the campaign against the Japanese was at its very height. The 15th and 24th Philippine Civil Affairs Units helped a peaceful, happy segment of the Visayan population in its rapid recovery from the grim effects of an all-too-long Japanese occupation.

Considering facts and figures, meanwhile, the Division G-2, Lt. Col. Carl D. McFerren, was able to report that operations against the enemy had been eminently successful. Reports showed that 9,958 had been killed or found dead by Americal Division units. In addition, 380 prisoners of war represented the largest number taken in any of the Americal's campaigns.

Success in the broad Victor II target area, however, had been costly. Up to June 30 the entire Division, including all attached units, had suffered the staggering total of 10,566 casualties. Of these, though, the G-1, Lt. Col. Lincoln W. Stoddard, listed 2,427 as actual battle casualties. The remaining 8,139 included officers and men who fell before the onslaught of recurrent malaria, dengue fever, yellow jaundice, dysentery, skin rashes and other tropical diseases. Because they all required treatment and often evacuation and replacement, these men too, were casualties of the campaign.

Of the 2,427 battle casualties, 24 officers and 425 enlisted men were killed in action or died of wounds suffered in action. Nine others were still carried on record as missing in action. The wounded included 99 officers and 1,793 men, while 5 other officers and 72 men were reported injured in action.

Although the Division's combat casualties were considerably fewer in number than those known to have been inflicted on the enemy, the figures indicated to observers the stubbornness with which the Japanese held fast to every key position throughout the target area.

The fighting on Cebu itself brought death to 9,321 Japanese during the 96-day campaign. To attain this result, men of the Americal killed an average of 97 enemy per day. Three weeks of action on Bohol netted about 5 per day for a total of 110 enemy killed. The lack of frontal contact with large numbers of enemy on Negros held the 164th Infantry's average to a little less than 9 per day, but in sixty days of combat the North Dakotans slew 527 Japanese.

In the weeks ahead, before the Americal's departure from Cebu, much more was to be learned regarding the over-all effect of the Victor II operation on the Japanese. The Division's actions would be deemed far more successful than they now appeared.

As the reports of operations were being compiled, attention was turned to one detachment from the Division which had operated outside the Visayas for a short time during the campaign. Now that these troops had rejoined the Division, a full report could be obtained for the first time.

After its return from Bohol on April 28, the 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry, operated for a time under direct control of Division headquarters. Its artillery support—Battery A, 245th Field Artillery—operated in turn under Division Artillery control and under attachment to others of the Americal's artillery battalions. On May 9 both units were withdrawn to Basak for rapid regrouping in preparation for duty elsewhere.

Three days later the battalion combat team departed from the Cebu City docks in a small convoy of LSMs and LCIs. On the morning of May 13, after an easy voyage across open water to the southeast, the force put ashore at Macajalar Bay in northern Mindanao. On arrival the combat team, as a unit, was attached to 108th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, a unit operating apart from its parent 40th Infantry Division.

Up to this time little was known concerning the exact mission of this Americal Division detachment, other than the fact that it was to reinforce the 108th. Once ashore, the commander of the 164th's 3d Battalion, Major Francis T. Kane, hurried to report to Col. Maurice D. Stratta, the 108th's regimental commander, for further instructions.

At 0830 on May 10, the 108th had made a surprisingly unopposed landing at Bugo, on Macajalar Bay. By 1200 on the same day the beachhead had been secured and the regiment began an advance down broad Sayre Highway to the south. Within forty-eight hours they took important Del Monte airfield. Aerial reconnaissance showed that the Japanese were withdrawing south, constantly being harassed by American and Allied aircraft. On May 13, as the representatives of the Americal were coming ashore, leading elements of the 108th Infantry were running into stiff opposition at the entrance to Mangima Canyon, some distance south of Del Monte.

The commander of the 108th had expected the arrival of the 3d Battalion, but he was surprised to learn that a field artillery battery had also come with it. After determining the strength of the detachment, Colonel Stratta assigned the North Dakotans the task of guarding Del Monte airfield and the key bridges along Sayre Highway between Del Monte and the bay to the north. He then ordered the 245th Field Artillery's Battery A to report to the commander of the 164th Field Artillery under an attachment effective the following day.

For the next nine days the Japanese resisted every attempt made by the 108th Infantry to reduce the strong positions in Mangima Canyon. Meanwhile, elements of the regiment were sent around the canyon to

take up a new drive south along the main highway. So rapid was the advance that supplies piled up at knocked-out bridges which the engineers rushed to repair. To keep the advance column moving with all the speed possible, supplies were sent forward by air.

Near Impalutao, twenty-three miles south of Bugo, the 108th registered its most important gain as it made contact on May 24 with elements of the 31st Infantry Division driving up from the south. This, in effect, opened a U.S.-controlled passage through the center of Mindanao and split the Japanese forces in two.

Despite the intensity of the action during this time, the 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry, played no part in the progress of the campaign. However, Battery A, 245th Field Artillery, acted as a fourth firing battery for the 164th Field Artillery and carried the Americal Division banner deep into the heart of Mindanao. On May 22, the battery moved with its foster-parent battalion from Del Monte to new positions at Maluko. By this time the fast-moving infantrymen had pushed beyond artillery range as broken bridges prevented further forward displacements.

War correspondents on Mindanao at this time, hearing that elements of the Americal Division had joined the 108th, assumed that these new troops were taking full part in the drive south from Macajalar Bay. When the 108th joined forces with the 31st Division on May 24, press reports published in American newspapers erroneously credited the Americal with the major share in the victory, much to the dismay of the 108th Infantry and the 40th Division. The real truth was not made known in Division circles until the battalion combat team returned to Cebu.

On June 2 Battery A was detached from the 164th Field Artillery and ordered to rejoin the 164th Infantry's 3d Battalion at Agusan. The battalion combat team was now assigned the mission of contacting and eliminating an enemy force thought to be located in the foothills a short distance southwest of Impasugong. A thorough search of the assigned sector revealed no trace of the Japanese. Consequently, on June 7 the detachment moved to Lanabo, a short distance south of Maylaybaylay, under attachment to the 31st Division.

After a brief period of inactivity under the 31st Division new orders were received on June 12 starting the combat team on a seventy-mile journey northward to Macajalar Bay. Heavy rains, which made virtually impassable quagmires of the main roads, forced the group to halt at Maylaybaylay for some thirty-three hours. However, by 2400 on June 13

the detachment had reached the bay and had established a new temporary bivouac.

This marked the end of active operations on Mindanao for the two units. It was not until June 18 that transportation arrived at the beach to return the troops to Cebu. By the morning of the following day all personnel had debarked at the Cebu City docks.

By July 1, in preparation for grimmer tasks ahead, the Division had been transferred from Eighth Army to Sixth Army. It was Sixth Army, commanded by Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger, that had made the first powerful assaults on the shores of Leyte nearly nine months before. The Americal's future training, therefore, was to be carried out under the able direction of a combat-wise commander.

Even as the formal transfer of the Division to Sixth Army was being completed, training for some units was beginning in earnest. For other units training began more slowly with but fifteen hours of classes scheduled per week. The outfit now assumed a personality split between training in earnest, partial training and rest.

On June 30, with but little relaxation after combat assignments which had sapped its strength, the 132d Infantry Regimental Combat began strenuous amphibious training maneuvers. To aid in the exercises to be held for the 132d and its attached units, the Navy sent its Transport Division 48, consisting of five assault transports. In addition, the naval surface force was augmented by four patrol vessels, five LSMs, four LCI gunboats and seven LSTs.

In general, the amphibious exercises were to open with a brief period of training ashore, followed by loading of personnel and equipment and by detailed training afloat. A week's intensive work was to be climaxed by a full-scale regimental combat team problem which was to feature the capture of a beachhead at Danao, seventeen miles above Cebu City. By June 28, Division headquarters had set up the tactical problem and had prepared a complete and detailed field order covering the final ship-to-shore assault.

Based on the assumption that the Victor II operation had not yet taken place and that all of Cebu was still in Japanese hands, the Americal Division, less one regimental combat team, was to land at Talisay on D-day and was to carry through with the capture of Cebu City and its environs as it actually had done on and after March 26. The remaining regimental combat team, as a diversionary thrust, was to land at Danao on D minus 1 and was to establish a strong perimeter

from which a drive south could be started. Estimates of the enemy strength on the island followed the pattern outlined before the actual Talisay landing. This placed some eight hundred survivors of the Japanese 1st Division in and around Danao.

The training planned for the 132d Infantry and attached units was actually the first in a series of three such problems designed eventually to school all three of the Americal's regimental combat teams in all phases of amphibious warfare. Between June 30 and July 7 the Illinois regiment was to be put through its paces. The 182d Infantry Regimental Combat Team was to cover the days between July 10 and July 15, while the 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team was to step in from July 16 to July 23.

Each combat team was to operate under the organizational arrangement with which it had gained past combat successes. Each regiment was to have the support of its regular 105mm artillery battalion, one battery of 155mm howitzers, an engineer and a medical company, plus a detachment from the 592d Joint Assault Signal Company. Elements of the 480th Amphibian Truck Company, sporting DUKWs, were to serve each combat team in the movement of howitzers, personnel and equipment from the ships to the shore.

For its problem the 132d Infantry was to have the added medical support of half of the 670th Medical Clearing Company, while the 182d and 164th were to be aided by the 17th and 10th Portable Surgical Hospitals, respectively.

In general support for shore-party work during the more than three weeks of training ahead, combat and service forces assigned and attached to the Americal were now organized as follows:

Shore Battalion, 542d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment (less
Companies D and E)
Companies A, B and C, 52d Engineer Combat Battalion
592d Joint Assault Signal Company (less detachments)
Detachment, 121st Medical Battalion
Detachment, Military Police Platoon, Americal Division
Detachment, trucks, combat team in training

The shore party was now assigned the chore of organizing, directing and controlling movement of supplies and equipment across the beach. Added to this, the shore party was to be concerned with the defense of

the beachhead, using, if necessary, all attached troops not included in combat echelons.

Between June 30 and July 23, therefore, the life of the Americal centered around the amphibious exercises. For units not actively engaged in these operations the days on Cebu, for the time being at least, became periods of half training, half recreation. Five mornings each week were spent on routine subjects as close-order drill, care and maintenance of equipment, interior guard duty and military courtesy and discipline. Organized athletics filled much of the remaining time.

As the Americal Division passed from the control of Eighth Army, Lt. Gen. Robert L. Eichelberger passed on to Maj. Gen. William H. Arnold, the Division commander, a message from General MacArthur. The message, published for the benefit of all who earned the words of praise, read in part:

“ . . . my heartiest commendation for the brilliant execution of the Visayan campaign. This is a model of what a light but aggressive command can accomplish in rapid exploitation.”

To the south of Liloan, the Division base camp, control of Cebu City and all its important installations had long since been turned over to Base S, United States Army Services of Supply. As a major port and wartime base now serving Allied forces, the provincial capital was rapidly gaining in importance. Debris in the dock area, the city and the ship channels had all been cleared. Ships of all types moved into the harbor and tied up at the docks to discharge valuable cargoes destined for use against the enemy in the future.

Within Cebu City the American Red Cross had established extensive recreational facilities for all troops on the island. Through local arrangements, Cebu's prettiest Filipinas and *mestizas* served as hostesses at dances held for units of the Americal. In many ways this was turning out to be a real period of rest and rehabilitation for the Division.

In other parts of the Pacific a great deal of truly significant progress had been made since the first of the year. After Sixth Army had smashed its way ashore at Lingayen Gulf in northern Luzon on January 9, 1945, the way was cleared for new offensives in the Central Pacific.

On February 19, V Marine Amphibious Corps began grappling in volcanic sands for a toe-hold on tiny Iwo Jima, only 775 miles from Honshu, Japan's principal home island. New chapters in Marine Corps

history were written in blood and sweat on a piece of ground barely large enough to support an airfield.

Later the following month Tenth Army went into action for the first time in the Pacific as it landed the 77th Infantry Division, veterans of Leyte, on Kerama Retto on March 26, the same day the Americal Division struck at Talisay. Five days later XXIV Corps and III Marine Amphibious Corps, under Tenth Army direction, established a beach-head on Okinawa, key island in the Ryukyu chain. The landing precipitated one of the bloodiest campaigns in the history of Pacific operations during World War II.

To the very end the Japanese on Okinawa resisted with much more than characteristic Oriental bitterness, determined to make the U.S. forces pay dearly for every inch of ground won. The Tenth Army commander, Lt. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner, was killed by enemy artillery fire on a visit to the front lines only three days before all organized resistance on the island ceased.

In a material way, Japan began feeling the loss of Saipan in the fall of 1944. From giant American-built air bases on Saipan a new aerial weapon, the B-29 (Superfortress) was unleashed against the Tokyo area on November 24, 1944. This marked the first major air strike against Japanese home soil since the famed Doolittle "Shangri-La" attack in April 1942. The subsequent capture of Iwo Jima enabled the Air Force to offer fighter protection to B-29s to and from target areas in Japan.

Once the capture of Okinawa placed U.S. forces in position less than five hundred miles from Japan's southernmost island, Japan hung like a fruit on the vine, ripening for the harvest. For the Allies the harvest was to be the invasion of the Japanese homeland—the final death blow which would bring Japan to her knees in defeat.

By now Japanese air power had been all but completely spent in abortive attacks against the undeniable onrush of American and Allied power. Likewise, the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea, in October, had virtually eliminated the Japanese Navy as a factor to be considered. Pre-invasion naval bombardments and carrier air strikes could now be added to the powerful blows being delivered by B-29s.

Meanwhile, on Cebu the Americal Division was bringing its amphibious training to a close on July 23. Immediately the Division swung into an intense period of training ashore. The early 15-hour week had given way to 24-hour training week. In early August a 39-hour week was begun and specialist schools were stepped up.

As part of the energetic training program being carried out under

his command, General MacArthur, on July 30, instituted an information and education program centered around Japan, her past and her present. Included in the topics were:

- “Objective Japan”
- “Japan Plots to Conquer”
- “National Hara-Kiri”
- “Cherry Blossoms and Samurai Swords”
- “How Strong is Japan?”
- “How to Stay Alive in Japan”

These lectures, coupled with the hardening drills and maneuvers being carried on within the Division, indicated to all that some super-important task lay ahead. Although strict censorship was imposed on all, it was universally agreed that Japan itself would be the next target. But where would the Americal fit in?

As summer came to Manila, General MacArthur's headquarters took on the appearance of an extremely busy beehive. In hushed tones top-ranking staff officers spoke of the future. Men, ships, planes and equipment were now being gathered quietly all through the Philippines and on Okinawa as well.

In cooperation with Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, Central Pacific commander, General MacArthur soon completed the first of two plans under which Japanese forces on the home islands were to be met and engaged in the final death struggle.

The first plan, designated Operation Olympic, was now to be begun in the fall, reportedly in early November. Under this scheme, Gen. Walter Krueger's Sixth Army (I, IX, XI Corps and V Marine Amphibious Corps) was to seize and secure beachheads on Kyushu, southernmost of the Japanese home islands. I Corps was to land at Miyazaki, on the east coast; XI Corps at Ariaka Bay, in the south; V Marine Amphibious Corps at Kagoshima, on the west coast. As a floating reserve, IX Corps was to be feinted in the direction of Shikoku, the island to the north of Kyushu, and was then to be ready to land on call at any of the three corps beachheads.

Getting set for the operation, XI Corps, commanded by Lt. Gen. C. P. Hall, gathered three divisions (43d Infantry Division, 1st Cavalry Division and Americal Division). How the main effort was to be assigned within the corps and subsequently within the Americal was never made known, for Operation Olympic was destined never to be carried out.

Quietly, almost unnoticed, a lone B-29, the *Enola Gay*, soared in over Hiroshima, on southeastern Honshu, on the morning of August 6, 1945. High over the center of the city a single bomb was loosed a moment before the plane turned abruptly from the area. All of Hiroshima suddenly shook and shuddered under an unbelievably tremendous blast of fire and power. An ominous cloud spiralled upward with incredible speed and blossomed like a tree of death over the stricken city. Beneath the cloud Hiroshima lay in smoking ruin; death and destruction was everywhere. The first atomic bomb had been detonated in combat.

Even before the Japanese could make a reasonable estimate of the staggering toll of casualties and of the overwhelming extent of damage, the second atomic bomb was dropped three days later. The city of Nagasaki, on western Kyushu, was practically obliterated by the blast. Thousands more were killed as all Japan grew to fear every American plane seen over the home islands.

Guarded press releases appearing in the Americal Division news sheet on the morning of August 7 told of the devastation wrought on Hiroshima by one bomb. The atomic bomb was cautiously referred to as being approximately equal in destructive power to twenty thousand tons of TNT. People wondered what this war had come to, that the mind of man could create such a weapon. It seemed sure, though, that the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were meant to tell Japan that complete annihilation was to come if the country persisted in fighting to the end.

On August 8, two days after the destruction of Hiroshima, the Soviet Union entered the picture in the Orient by declaring war on Japan. Without a moment's hesitation, Soviet armies struck across the northern Manchurian border and locked the Japanese Kwantung Army, once the pride of the Emperor's ground forces, in a series of decisive battles. Defeat after defeat followed for the enemy as the Red Army drove deeper into Manchuria.

Other Soviet troops quickly overran Japanese garrisons in the southern end of Sakhalin Island to recapture territory once held by Imperial Russia. Korea, too, was rapidly seized as Japan's empire on the Asiatic mainland dwindled to nothing.

On August 10, realizing that further resistance now could only bring untold sufferings to his people, Emperor Hirohito, long a figurehead in his own government, seized the reins. Through the neutral Swiss government representatives in Tokyo, his Cabinet made known the fact that Japan was willing to accept the terms of the Potsdam ultimatum—

unconditional surrender—on the sole condition that the throne of Japan remain intact.

It was not until August 14, however, that the news was released to the world that Japan was willing to surrender. Even at this time the news was not official, not final, for the Japanese offer had not been accepted by the Allies. Yet the all-but-final word that the end was in sight turned the Americal Division bivouacs into bedlams of joy. The news was passed to all units with but one phrase—"It's all over!"—which covered the Liloan countryside like a sudden rain squall.

Guarding against a let-down or a disappointment, Sixth Army headquarters issued strict orders that the intensive training program would continue until official, definite word was received through War Department channels. This did come on August 15, even while some of the Americal's units were embarking on two-day training problems in the field. All tactical problems were called off and all units were instructed to report at once to their base camps.

Elements of the 164th Infantry were absent from Cebu at this time, having moved to Bohol on August 12 to relieve troops of the 132d Infantry operating security and reconnaissance patrols on the island. Since the close of the Victor II operation on June 20 units of each of the three regiments, in turn, had assumed such missions in northern Cebu and on Bohol, operating with the guerrilla forces under orders from Eighth Army Area Command.

When it first appeared that Japan desired to surrender, General Arnold and his new G-3, Lt. Col. Lothar B. Sibert, were ordered to proceed by air to XI Corps headquarters for talks with General Hall. Should the capitulation of Japan be brought about, it was outlined in the conference, the Americal Division was to play an important role in the occupation of the home islands. Operation Blacklist, the title given the occupation operations, was to be initiated on B-day—Baker day—the date for which was to be announced later.

At 2110, August 15, after the Division's naval gunfire and fire support indoctrination classes had been postponed earlier in the day, all offensive operations against the Japanese on Cebu were ordered halted. However, since the enemy forces had little or no communication with their own headquarters and could not learn of the surrender, security and reconnaissance missions were continued. It was thought that it would take several days to spread the news to the isolated Japanese troops hiding throughout the Philippines.

A radiogram from XI Corps headquarters, received at 2335, estab-

lished August 15, as late in the day as it was, as Baker Day; Operation Blacklist was now in effect. For the occupation, the Americal Division and its immediate higher headquarters were to be transferred from Sixth Army back to Eighth Army.

The first real effects of the Japanese suit for peace had actually been felt in the Americal's training program on August 12, although few knew the reason. At that time XI Corps' Wet-Cold Training Program, specializing in training in the use of newly designed combat clothing, was suspended. By August 16 (B plus 1), all training pointed toward Operation Olympic was cancelled. In its place a new program was begun, one which emphasized personal appearance, occupation duties and riot actions.

Much of the hubbub of activity had been set in motion on Baker Day by unprecedented radio broadcast made by Emperor Hirohito over Radio Tokyo at 1200. Addressing the world, the ruler of Japan said:

"Accepting the terms set forth in the Declaration issued by the heads of the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and China on July 26, 1945, at Potsdam and subsequently adhered to by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, I have commanded the Japanese Imperial Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters to sign on my behalf the instrument of surrender presented by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and to issue General Orders to the Military and Naval forces in accordance with the direction of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. I command all my people forthwith to cease hostilities, to lay down their arms and faithfully carry out all the provisions of the instrument of surrender and the General Orders issued by the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters thereunder."

Early on the morning of August 16, in an effort to quickly regroup all his troops, General Arnold requested and received permission from Eighth Army headquarters to withdraw the small 164th Infantry garrison on Bohol. By August 19 this was accomplished and the packing and crating of supplies and equipment began at fever pitch.

Higher headquarters now directed that the Division make attempts to establish contact with Japanese commanders on Cebu in order to arrange for the formal surrender of their forces. Opening the campaign

to bring in the remaining enemy forces, General Arnold ordered several thousand leaflets prepared and dropped over areas where troops were known to be in hiding:

"This is to inform you that Japanese forces throughout the world have surrendered by order of his August Majesty, the Emperor of Japan. On 14 August 1945, it was officially proclaimed that Japanese wherever they might be, would lay down their arms, having realized that peace was the only solution to a hopeless cause. Now that your Emperor has come to an honorable agreement, we feel that you on Cebu should come to us as we have always wanted you to. In the past some of you have taken advantage of our guarantees of fair and kind treatment. Now that hostilities have ceased, lay down your arms and come to us. You will be treated fairly according to the rules of the Hague and Geneva Conventions.

"There is one point where you can assemble and be collected: Sacsac.

"Come to the above point unarmed during daylight hours waving this leaflet."

On August 17, unaware of the activities of Hirohito, and believing the leaflet part of a U.S. trick to force them to give up, the Japanese came back with a message of their own which was found nailed to a post near Sacsac:

"We saw your propaganda of 16th August 1945; do not believe your propaganda. We request that you send to us a Staff Officer of General Yamashita in Luzon if it is true that Imperial Japanese surrendered to the Americans."

To counter the note signed by the commander in chief of the Imperial Japanese forces on Cebu, General Arnold could only make another attempt to convince the enemy of the truth. As a result, on August 18, more than three thousand leaflets were printed and dropped along the northwest coast of the island.

"Your message rejecting the offer of the Commanding General of the American forces on Cebu to come to an honorable meeting has been received. It is regretted that his integrity has been doubted. In order to convince you that his August Majesty, the Emperor, has proclaimed the

unconditional surrender of Japan and that he has ordered the cessation of all hostilities, it is requested that you send a dependable officer, preferably of field grade, to contact American forces at the 82 kilometer mark at 1000 either 19 or 20 August. This officer is guaranteed safe conduct to the headquarters of the American forces and return to your headquarters."

By this time the Japanese were beginning to realize that for them the war was practically over. A news leaflet dropped on August 11 had told of the Soviet's entry into the conflict. Three days later, through Filipino sources, they had heard the first rumors of Hirohito's acceptance of the Potsdam ultimatum.

Because of communications difficulties, Japanese commanders on Cebu had not been able to get in touch with their higher headquarters to get official word regarding the news. To stem a tide of defeatism, they issued strict orders that officers and men would be severely punished if they were known to believe in what was termed "American propaganda."

General Arnold's second leaflet now seemed to fall on fertile ground. Lt. Gen. Sadashi Kataoka, commander of the decimated Japanese 1st Division, decided that he would at least investigate the matter by taking advantage of the U.S. general's request and guarantees. To do so he sent Lieutenant Hosaka to the 82-kilometer mark at 1200 on August 20 to meet U.S. representatives.

The Japanese officer was taken to Americal Division headquarters near Silut Lagoon where he was given a summary of events by Division interpreters. After indicating that he was not convinced, he was allowed to listen to a Domei News Agency broadcast direct from Tokyo, during which more news of the surrender was given out. The lieutenant was now convinced of the truth and was ready to return to his headquarters with instructions from General Arnold.

Later the next day the Americal's commander received a note from General Kataoka:

"I received your kind message from First Lieutenant Hosaka, who was sent to your headquarters, at 1200 on 20 August.

"I have faith in your veracity and am positively convinced that Japan has surrendered. At the same time, I wish to express my sincere thanks for the kind treatment accorded the lieutenant.

"I am sending the following persons to your headquarters. They will be at the 84 kilometer road marker at 1000 on 22 August. It is requested that auto transportation be sent to that location.

Chief of Staff: Colonel Okabayashi
Staff Officer: Major Dei
Staff Officer: Captain Ueda
Staff Officer: First Lieutenant Hosaka
NCO's: 2
Privates: 2

KATAOKA
Lieutenant General
CG, Northern Cebu Forces"

At the designated spot on August 22, a party of Americal Division representatives headed by the new G-2, Major Raymond G. Chesley, met the Japanese group. Plans were subsequently discussed whereby the enemy forces in northern Cebu would be formally surrendered to General Arnold. All of the necessary details were ironed out before the Japanese returned to their headquarters with the necessary instructions.

Unfortunately, General Kataoka was not in a position to offer all of the Cebu forces in capitulation. Apart from his troops, two other groups were located near the northwestern coast of the island, each independent of the 1st Division. One was commanded from headquarters near Balamban by Lt. Gen. Sanehira Fukue, commander of the 102d Division. The other, under Rear Adm. Satoshi Harada, consisted of troops centered near Asturias.

On August 25 a second pre-surrender conference was held near Balamban, at which Col. Satoshi Wada, chief of staff of the 102d Division, acted as General Fukue's representative. The Japanese officer was also empowered to obtain information concerning surrender plans for Admiral Harada's units. These talks now accounted for virtually all enemy forces known to be on Cebu.

Three days later, on August 28, in a large open field not far from Ilihan, in northern Cebu, smartly dressed detachments from all Americal Division units paraded up to the foot of a small cleared knoll. Shortly afterward the Japanese marched snappily in and halted.

On orders from troop commanders the enemy soldiers broke ranks, stacked their rifles, lined up machine guns and heavy weapons, made

neat piles of ammunition belts and fell back into formation. The Japanese were now disarmed.

Acting as self-appointed commander of Japanese 35th Army, General Kataoka led General Fukue, Admiral Harada and the two other generals up to the knoll and halted in front of Maj. Gen. William H. Arnold, commander of the Americal. Behind the generals two ranks of senior Japanese unit commanders formed.

The short, slightly built Japanese commander unbuckled his Samurai sword and unceremoniously passed it to General Arnold. The others followed suit as the Americal's Commanding General moved down the line to his right. General Kataoka was now directed to bring to a close the informal surrender ceremonies by signing the terms previously agreed upon.

With this, 2,667 officers and men were turned over to the Americal. Included in the group were a number of Japanese nurses, the first women U.S. forces on Cebu had ever seen among enemy troops.

A short time later, just after the surrender had been completed, one unidentified Japanese general approached General Arnold and addressed him through an interpreter. He surprisingly asked that his sword be returned to him. The general explained that he could bring in more troops from the interior if he could get his sword back as a solitary symbol of authority. Thinking that little harm could be done in any event, General Arnold granted his request. Several hours later, sure enough, the Japanese general proudly led several hundred more troops into the Ilihan clearing and returned his sword to the victors.

Plans drawn up at the Balamban surrender talks on August 25 called for the assembling of enemy units between August 29 and August 31 at Canun, Asturias and Balamban where they would be disarmed. By August 30, before the operations were completed, an unofficial estimate revealed that some 7,200 who had been under the command of General Fukue and Admiral Harada had been disarmed and placed in confinement. This raised the total known Japanese on the island at the time of the capitulation to more than 9,800—far in excess of U.S. estimates of the enemy strength.

How many more Japanese were located and disarmed was not determined, for the Americal Division had other more important work to do. Committed to take part in Operation Blacklist, all units had continued packing and crating for the movement to Japan while the surrender negotiations were being carried on. The 77th Infantry Division, hardened

on Leyte and Okinawa, now resting on Cebu, took over the task of controlling the remainder of the Japanese coming in from the hills.

The first troop transports arrived in the harbor outside Cebu City on August 25, after which the ships' loading officers came ashore for conference. Loading started almost immediately so that by the morning of August 31 all ships were ready to take on the troops.

Under the command of Col. John W. Ferris, Division Artillery executive officer, a rear echelon was being left on Cebu to care for and subsequently move the remaining supplies and equipment on call. Original plans called for the movement of the entire Division in one convoy, but a lack of ships necessitated the substitution of twenty slow LSMs for ten scheduled LSTs. The rear echelon was established when it became apparent that everything could not be moved in one convoy.

The LSMs departed from Cebu City on August 30 on the first leg of the journey to Japan. After a brief pause off Leyte on the next day the ships moved out of the entrances to Leyte Gulf and headed generally north. By getting away ahead of the bulk of the Division it was hoped that the LSMs and the transports could all reach the objective area at about the same time.

At 1800 on August 31 the Americal Division command post went into operation on board the USS *Harris*, flagship of the Navy's Transport Squadron 13. On nineteen transports and the two Liberty ships which comprised the squadron's Transport Divisions 35, 51 and 53, 1,112 officers and 17,733 enlisted men assigned and attached to the Americal loaded later during the day. By dark all troops were aboard the vessels and the convoy was ready to move out to sea under the protection of four escorting destroyers.

The increased strength of the Division included units attached to take part in the now-cancelled Operation Olympic. These were sailing to Japan with the Division, after which time they were to revert to direct control of XI Corps headquarters. Included in the list were:

- 542d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment (less units)
- 52d Engineer Combat Battalion
- 58th Evacuation Hospital
- 399th Medical Collecting Company
- 670th Medical Clearing Company
- 78th Malaria Control Detachment
- 578th Ordnance Ammunition Company

106th Ordnance Medium Maintenance Company

183d Bomb Disposal Squad

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 523d Quartermaster Group

321st Quartermaster Truck Company

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 377th Port Battalion

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 492d Port Battalion

167th Port Company

220th Port Company

27th Air Support Party

On the morning of September 1, 1945, the Americal Division took its last look at its last scene of combat, Cebu, and moved out to sea toward Japan. Having played its part well in contributing to the victory in the Pacific, the Division now embarked on a tour of duty as ambassadors of peace in a land once filled with hatred for the United States.

End Of The Road: Japan!

THE PEACE WHICH SETTLED OVER THE PACIFIC IN LATE AUGUST was, in some ways, an uneasy one. Although representatives of the Emperor and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters had been flown to Luzon for conferences at General MacArthur's headquarters, an air of tension could still be felt. Was this really the end of the war? Or was this a grand-scale act of treachery designed to lure thousands of the finest U.S. troops in the Pacific to their deaths in Japan? The answers followed swiftly.

In what has been agreed as one of the most daring operations of the war, a small reconnaissance party landed at Atsugi airfield, twenty miles southwest of Tokyo, on the morning of August 28 to determine the condition of the field. The first echelons of occupation troops were to be flown into Japan, and Atsugi was designated as the first U.S. base in the home islands.

Outnumbered thousands to one by some four million enemy still under arms in the Japanese homeland, this intrepid group could very easily have been annihilated by any force of die-hards who wished to continue the fight to the bitter end. General MacArthur's headquarters waited anxiously for word from them. Soon it came; no hostile action had been encountered.

The heartening news that all was quiet in Japan came as a relief to harried and perplexed intelligence and operations officers. Definite plans could now be based on the assumption that no untoward incidents would take place and that no organized resistance to the occupation operations would be offered by the once-strong Japanese military clique.

At 1600 on August 30, the first elements of the 11th Airborne Division alighted from C-54s at Atsugi airfield to establish the first organized unit command post of U.S. forces in Japan. Some six hours later the commanding general of the Eighth Army, Lt. Gen. Robert L.

Eichelberger, arrived from the Philippines to take personal command of the activities.

Simultaneously, units of the United States Fleet, for weeks no strangers to the coast of Japan, steamed up into Tokyo Bay. In accordance with instructions, the Japanese had disarmed each coastal defense position and had marked the way to Yokosuka Naval Base where, at 1000, troops of the United States Marine Fleet Landing Force moved ashore to take charge. Contact was quickly made with units of the 11th Airborne Division. All was going along smoothly.

Later in the day, at 1419, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, in his C-54, the *Bataan*, touched down on the main runway at Atsugi airfield. After but a few moments at the field, during which he exchanged greetings with General Eichelberger, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers departed for Yokohama along a fifteen-mile route lined with many thousands of fully armed Japanese soldiers. In a gesture previously reserved only for the Emperor and members of his family, the troops stood stiffly at attention and turned their backs to the road as General MacArthur sped to his new headquarters in the New Grand Hotel.

By the close of the first day of the occupation, August 30, 123 planes had flown 4,200 troops of the 11th Airborne into Japan from Okinawa. Weather permitting, many more were to follow.

On the morning of September 2, an impressive array of Allied naval power rode peacefully at anchor in Tokyo Bay, awaiting the final development in the defeat of Japan. Superfortresses and carrier-borne aircraft spread a noisy curtain across the skies.

In the midst of the giant armada floated the USS *Missouri*, goliath of American battleships. On its decks were gathered high-ranking military representatives of all allied nations at war with Japan. Any feelings of extreme joviality were absent on the *Missouri* on this gray September morning. With dignity and simplicity, a once-great nation was being brought to judgment for its years of aggression and tyranny.

As though in stern justice toward those who had defeated them in 1942, Lt. Gen. Jonathan M. Wainwright, of Bataan and Corregidor, and British General Sir Arthur Percival, of Singapore, both lean and wasted from more than three years as prisoners of the Japanese, were on hand to witness the ceremony.

After addressing his opening remarks to the assembled delegates from the Allied Powers and to the world at large, the Supreme Commander turned his attention to a long, simple-looking table which had

been borrowed from the ship's wardroom for the occasion. On this table lay a document, the instrument of surrender which was at this moment to climax every U.S. and Allied move in the Pacific since that fateful Sunday morning in December nearly four years before.

At the direction of General MacArthur, Baron Mamora Shigemitsu, acting "by command and in behalf of the Emperor of Japan and the Japanese Government," moved forward from a position facing the table. Bending over, he slowly affixed his signature to the document. Following this, "in behalf of the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters," Gen. Yoshijiro Umezu stepped forward and signed quickly. According to the Japanese calendar, this was "the second day of the ninth month of the twentieth year of Showa, being the two thousand six hundred and fifth from the Accession of the Emperor Zimu." The time was 0904. Japan had now surrendered!

Acting "for the United States, Republic of China, United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and in the interest of the other United Nations at war with Japan," General MacArthur moved quietly forward, sat down and signed the instrument of surrender. His written acceptance of the Japanese surrender, entered on the document at 0908, made it official. This was now VJ-day!

The Supreme Commander now beckoned to Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz to come forward and lead the designated representatives of the Allied Powers in signing for their respective countries. Quickly, Admiral Nimitz completed his role. The others followed; men from China, Great Britain, Russia, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand and from the Provisional Government of the French Republic.

When the last signature had been written into history, the ceremonies were brought to a close. As if by arrangement with the Almighty, as General MacArthur prayed that "peace be now restored to the world and that God will keep it always," the sun broke through the murky clouds and shone down on the gathering with a brilliant, happy light.

By this time the Americal Division was on the high seas moving toward the scene of this simple, impressive ceremony. Linked to the ships' radios, the public address systems throughout the convoy broadcast the proceedings to the troops. Ahead, thought all, there certainly lay peace.

The actual movement of the Americal onto the shores of Japan had already been planned with assault-landing efficiency. Prior to the initial landing at Atsugi airfield on August 28 there was no real evidence of the attitude of the Japanese as a whole regarding the surrender of their

country. Sudden outbreaks of fighting might offset early successful landings and precipitate a new and bloodier struggle.

Consequently, the Division, in a field order issued on August 24 planned an assault landing somewhere in the Sagami Bay-Tokyo Bay area, at a beach to be designated by Eighth Army and XI Corps. Two regiments were to land abreast, the 132d Infantry on the right and the 182d Infantry on the left. All units of the Division were to be ready to move into action without delay.

A more peaceful alternative called for a routine dock-side debarkation at Yokohama, just below Tokyo. But the units' state of combat readiness was not to be relaxed. Little was being left to chance.

Before dawn on September 8 Transport Squadron 13 began moving up through Uruga Kaikyo, the channel opening into Tokyo Bay. The complete absence of Japanese resistance to the occupation would now permit the Americal to unload quietly at the Yokohama docks. At 0800 the USS *Harris* with the Division command post aboard, dropped anchor in the bay off Yokohama and waited for further instructions from the shore.

A short time later XI Corps representatives boarded the transport for a conference with General Arnold and members of his staff. They brought with them an XI Corps field order issued the previous day which outlined the mission to be undertaken by the Americal.

Initially, the Division, less one regimental combat team, was to assemble around Hara-Machida, twenty miles southwest of the center of Tokyo. One regiment was to relieve the 8th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division in the Yokohama area by 1800 on September 10. Other units were to take over from elements of the 1st Cavalry Division in the Tachikawa area by the same time the next day. The Division was also to be ready to assume control of any sector in the zones now held by the 11th Airborne Division and the 27th Infantry Division.

An allowed modification of the corps resulted in the breaking up of the three regimental combat teams as such. This accomplished, General Arnold directed that Americal Division Artillery, operating as a unit with its four battalions, relieve the 8th Cavalry in Yokohama and Kawasaki by the time previously stipulated. Brig. Gen. LeCount H. Slocum, Commanding General of Division Artillery, was now to become commander of the occupation forces in the chief port city on Kanto Plain and in one of Japan's main industrial centers, that in southeastern Kawasaki, along the shores of Tokyo Bay.

Later on the morning of September 8, the first ships of the convoy edged up to the docks in Yokohama and began unloading. By evening,

when the operations were suspended for the night, the 132d and 164th Infantry Regiments had been debarked, along with some Division Artillery and service troops. By 1200 on September 10 all units of the Division had moved from the ships of the transport squadron to their assigned assembly areas.

At 0930 on September 9 the Division command post closed aboard the USS *Harris* and moved ashore. It reopened shortly at Fuchinobe station, northwest of the dock area, where office equipment was being set up in the Sagami Ordnance School and Arsenal. At 1530 on the same afternoon the Division Artillery command post went into operation in downtown Yokohama.

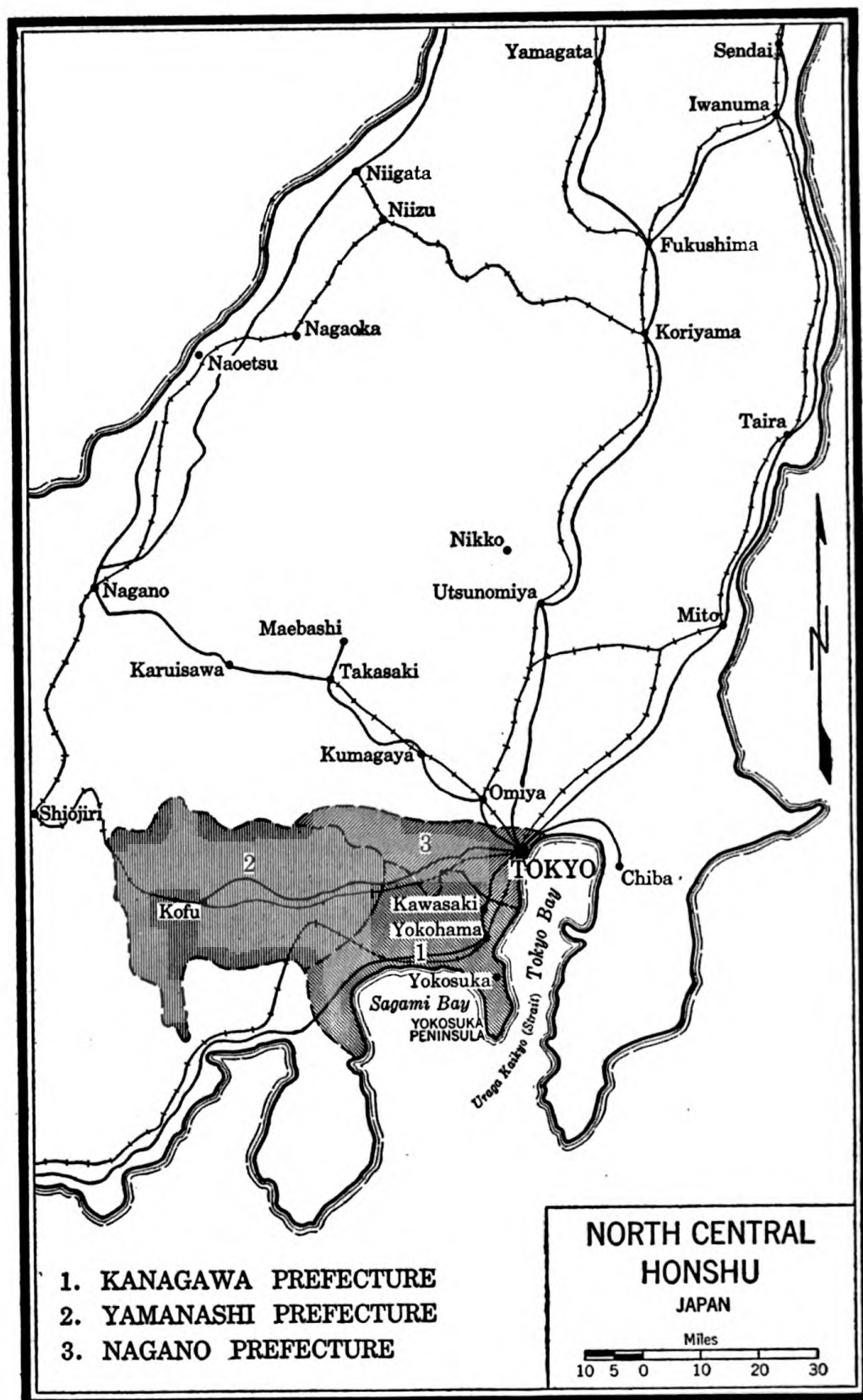
In general, Allied occupation policy in Japan now had three principal objectives. First, Japanese militarism and military nationalism were to be abolished. Second, liberal tendencies were to be encouraged. And last, conditions were to be created which would insure that Japan could never again become a menace to the peace of the world.

Throughout the operations in these advance stages of the occupation, the Allied forces, as military units, were to be primarily concerned with the first and last of these objectives. The demobilization and disarmament of the Japanese forces would, in effect, bring an end to militarism in the defeated land. Close inspection and supervision of Japanese industries would help prevent the country attaining a position which could, in the future, menace world and Asiatic security.

As the Americal prepared to take over its occupational responsibilities, it found that it had a threefold mission: (1) to make a reconnaissance of all Japanese military and industrial installations within assigned zones; (2) to guard each installation to assure fulfillment of the surrender terms; and (3) to carry out such orders as the commanding general, XI Corps, might require.

In an effort to avoid misunderstandings or to keep them at a minimum, and to facilitate coordination of policies, higher headquarters now embarked upon a plan of daily issuance of specific orders and instructions as a substitute for a blanket publication of broad directives.

Control of the Yokohama sector passed to General Slocum and his Division Artillery troops at 1800 on September 10. Fanned out through the sector were the three 105mm howitzer battalions: the 245th Field Artillery in the north, the 246th in the center and the 247th in the south, all covering a wide area extending from the Tama River, Tokyo's southern boundary, to the upper limits of Yokosuka Peninsula. The 221st Field Artillery, still



en route from Cebu, was to take over an area on Yokosuka Peninsula itself, south of that now held by the 247th.

The dock area in downtown Yokohama, did not fall under General Slocum's command. On arrival at the port, the 2d Engineer Special Brigade had taken over the problem of handling incoming and outgoing water traffic and of unloading troops and cargoes arriving in Yokohama.

On September 12 the slow LSMs finally pulled into Tokyo Bay bringing the 221st Field Artillery and elements of other Americal Division units. Save for the rear echelon back on Cebu, the entire Division was now on Honshu. The Americal now became the first full infantry division to reach Japan by ship after VJ-day—the 11th Airborne Division and troops of the 27th Infantry Division had been flown into Japan.

Moving westward and northwestward from Yokohama the three infantry regiments occupied sectors assigned by Division headquarters, sectors which, in some instances, corresponded with those of units of the 11th Airborne and 27th Infantry Divisions. In the north the 164th Infantry moved into an area west of Tokyo and generally north of the Tama River. Just to the south the 182d Infantry occupied a sector west of that of the Division Artillery, one which widely surrounded the Division command post at Fuchinobe station. Farther to the south the 132d Infantry took over a sector which bordered on Sagami Bay and which extended for more than fifteen miles along the beach.

By degrees, the regimental sectors were enlarged, extended and adjusted during the first two weeks in Japan. By 1800 on September 14, all elements of the 11th Airborne Division located within the Americal's zone were relieved. Within the Division Artillery sector the 221st Field Artillery assumed control of an area extending south to the tip of Yokosuka Peninsula, but exclusive of Yokosuka and its large naval base. Finally, at 1200 on September 25, control of the 27th Infantry Division area passed to the Americal, marking the last major expansion of boundaries made by the Division.

The sector of the 132d Infantry remained basically unchanged. Its boundaries ran from the limit of Division Artillery's zone south and west of Yokohama westward along Sagami Bay to Atami, spreading inland an average distance of eleven thousand yards. The northwest corner of the Illinois regiment's sector lay some nineteen thousand yards—approximately twelve miles—from the summit of famed Fuji San, Japan's majestic, sacred snow-capped volcano which rises 12,245 feet above sea level.

The 182d Infantry sector of occupation covered the center of the Americal Division's zone. Bounded on the east by Division Artillery, on

the south by the 132d Infantry and on the north by the 164th, the Bay Staters' territory spread some forty miles east to west, to the eastern border of Yamanishi Prefecture. From the Yokohama docks, therefore, the point at which they had landed on and after September 8, troops of the Americal were now spread sixty-one miles to the northwest, forty-five miles to the west, forty-one more miles to the southwest and some twenty-two miles to the south. As a whole, the entire sector of occupation encompassed more than 1,650 square miles of land, approximately six hundred square miles greater than the land area of the State of Rhode Island.

In addition to the control of this vast area, the Division was now ordered to begin a careful reconnaissance of Yamanishi Prefecture, to the west. Again, another large section of the Japanese homeland, another fifteen hundred square miles of land, fell under Division control.

Duty as occupation forces, thought by many to be principally an assignment of honor, was now rapidly becoming an overgrown headache of long hours of hard work for all units of the Division. Operational directives from Eighth Army, complete with daily changes and additions, outlined the tasks which had to be accomplished.

In compliance with instructions, infantrymen and artillerymen hurriedly but efficiently scoured the countryside in search of military and industrial installations. Guards were subsequently placed over most of the military installations and over many of the more vital industrial plants.

This burdensome assignment shortly developed to a degree which forced units of the Division to call upon practically all available personnel for reconnaissance and guard duties. During daylight hours only a scattered handful of cooks, mechanics and clerks was to be found within regimental, battalion or company headquarters.

Because the Americal was now operating in a foreign land and was confronted by an almost insurmountable language barrier, interpreters were needed as never before. Nisei enlisted men in the Division's language section were working under a load of classified material to be translated; these vital men could not be spared for attachment to subordinate units.

As a result, the Americal's military government section, headed by Lt. Col. James Taylor, Jr., and later by Lt. Col. J. H. Brewer, turned to the Japanese themselves. Within a short time more than fifty interpreters had been found, hired and allocated to the units.

The interpreters themselves were found to be an odd lot, some native Japanese, some half-Japanese, and some, foreigners. Native interpreters had learned English in schools or in the course of business as

agents for British or American concerns before the war. These people spoke English very formally, with little or none of our modern slang expressions. The others spoke English with varying degrees of fluency marked with typical Japanese intonations and with light or heavy European accents.

The heavily industrialized area around Japan's capital—Kanto Plain—was found to contain many large and important plants, factories and shipyards. Nine of these, all classified as major industries, were located within one artillery battalion sub-sector in Kawasaki, the plain's principal industrial city.

Each of the installations found was first thoroughly inspected to determine the extent of damage caused by Allied air attacks. Following this inquiries were made into the wartime background of each plant and factory. Particular attention was paid to the installations which had produced arms, ammunition, aircraft, tanks and other implements of war, primarily for the purpose of learning how these plants could be converted to the manufacture of civilian goods. Many of the plants inspected eagerly produced plans for immediate postwar production, utilizing what raw materials remained on hand.

In at least one instance, however, a Japanese plant was allowed to complete a wartime project. The shipbuilding branch of the Nippon Steel and Tube Company, with yards and docks on the Kawasaki waterfront, was allowed to continue work on a 6,000-ton freighter which had been launched just before the capitulation. When completed, the ship was to be used to carry Japanese troops back to the home islands from far-flung points in the Pacific.

This particular project pointed out the amazing difference between Japan and the United States with regard to industrial "know how." The freighter, now tied up at the company docks, needed only to be fitted inside and out in order to be made ready for its maiden voyage. Yet it had taken the company nine months to build and launch the unfitted hull and superstructure of the ship. In addition, company officials hopefully estimated that the vessel would be ready to sail within six months.

While searching all known Japanese industrial plants, Americal Division troops also carried on extensive reconnaissance of military posts, camps and stations within unit sectors and sub-sectors. Along the shore areas many antiaircraft batteries were found, some bristling with Japan's newest 120mm dual-purpose mounts, which, as fully installed units, weighed more than forty tons each. Smaller batteries, armed with 75mm guns, were numerous throughout the entire area. Supply dumps of all

kinds were scattered far and wide. Each installation seemed to present a new and varied problem.

By and large, most of the antiaircraft positions, depots and supply dumps, and the posts, camps and stations had been reported to the Supreme Commander's headquarters by the Japanese. This information was then passed through channels to the Division. But in a number of instances others were found in the course of the street-by-street, lane-by-lane checking of the territory under the American's jurisdiction.

As time went on there were few evidences of failure to comply with the surrender terms. All of the Japanese people, civilian and military, seemed only too anxious to cooperate with the Allied authorities. Some exceptions were recorded, however, but none represented any serious threat to the security of the troops.

In the 132d Infantry sector on September 29 a patrol came upon students of the Yamakita Young Men's School going through close-order drill, distinctly violating the Supreme Commander's orders. A subsequent investigation later the same day disclosed that the school maintained a stock of training arms and that military subjects had been part of the curriculum since the actual surrender. The arms were quickly confiscated and the school directors were warned that future violations would result in stern countermeasures.

This did not close the case. On the next day twenty additional rifles were found hidden in a pile of straw on the school grounds. The area was now placed under strict surveillance in an effort to locate any other unrevealed stores of weapons and military equipment. Reports from the area, analyzed in the light of the recent developments, indicated that civilians had been questioning the occupation forces regarding troop strength, unit identities and locations.

In another part of the Illinois zone the question of relative rank entered into discussions between a Japanese Naval Police officer and an officer from the 132d Infantry. The Japanese, a lieutenant commander, showed an undeniable unwillingness to cooperate with an intelligence officer from the 132d during an inspection of the Hakone Hotel, on the shores of Ashine Lake, not far from towering Fuji-San. The naval officer based his stand on the fact that he outranked his interrogator. On these grounds he refused to answer questions put to him or to carry out requests made by the American officer.

Civilian disorders were few and far between throughout the sectors. In four separate instances Japanese were apprehended while attempting to loot former military supply dumps and were turned over to the local

police for prosecution. In another minor incident a guard fired upon an unidentified prowler who failed to halt when challenged at night.

Within the segment of Kanto Plain now under Division control many foreign nationals were being found daily. Of these a large number were Koreans, brought from their native land by the Japanese. From these friendly people Allied intelligence officers gained a great deal of general information. At the Showa airstrip, in the 164th Infantry's zone, an unidentified woman thrust a note into a guard's hand and hurried off. The note, translated at Division headquarters, told of the treatment which captured B-29 crewmen had received in Japan.

"Welcome to American soldiers. I am a Korean woman. I thank you for freeing the Korean people from the Japanese. I will tell you what I saw and heard. When Tokyo was bombed by B-29s one B-29 fell. People said that the people in the B-29 were burned and died because they burned many people in Tokyo. When a B-29 fell near Tachikawa Airfield, the Tachikawa Gendarme directed the people to spit and slap at the pilots. People and children did that after they were brought to Tokyo. When the war stopped the factories, people stole and sold many machines and motors. Please do not tell the Japanese people what I said. Goodbye from one woman."

Working with Counterintelligence Corps personnel attached to the Americal, troops succeeded in locating a large number of German nationals in scattered sections of Kanagawa Prefecture, the province which comprises the greater part of the Division's zone. The resort town of Miyanoshita, sixty miles southwest of Yokohama, in the 132d Infantry's sector, yielded one of the largest single groups. Every group, small or large, was subsequently placed under arrest or restriction and all movements and activities of the Germans individually and collectively became subject to the closest scrutiny.

Throughout all of Japan searches were made for known or suspected foreign war criminals. Diplomatic officials of former puppet nations under Axis control and domination were high on the list of those sought. Traitors and turncoats of all sorts were turned up. Chief among the latter group were John Holland, an Australian radio announcer who became a script writer and propagandist for Radio Tokyo, and Mark Streeter, an American, who claimed his bitter attacks on President Roosevelt had been only a part of a roundabout attempt to convince the Japanese to give up.

More prominent among the Nazis captured in Japan after VJ-day

was one Col. Josef Meisinger, a police attaché at the German Embassy and the alleged chief of the Gestapo in Japan. Meisinger, however, became a prize catch not on the merits of his career in the Orient, but rather on the strength of the fact that to his name had long been attached the gruesome title, "Butcher of Warsaw."

In surprise raids on Sunday, September 29, Counterintelligence agents in the Americal's zone, and in other parts of the country, acting on secret orders from General MacArthur's headquarters, closed all Japanese banks and financial institutions. The Supreme Commander's memorandum ordering the closures, however, did not appear until the following morning. The raids were made quietly a day in advance in order to prevent wholesale destruction of incriminating records and documents.

As a result of the most extensive reconnaissance, determined interrogations and long hours of just plain hard work, troops of the Division, up to end of September, had virtually completed the location of the hundreds of intelligence targets of importance within the broad sector. Practically every road was covered, every building which could have housed any industrial enterprise was examined and every hill and cave which could have been the site of a military installation was scouted. The results were truly amazing.

By the morning of the 1st of October 460 installations located by the Americal Division had been classified as follows:

Aircraft plants	69	Signal installations	32
Arsenals	5	Electrical installations	30
Iron and steel plants	20	Machinery factories	19
Munitions plants	15	Machine shops	16
Ordnance shops	18	Laboratories	14
Chemical Plants	19	Schools	56
Automotive factories	18	Hospitals	14
Tank parks	4	Prisons	3
Military camps	18	Carbon and storage battery	
Naval installations	14	factories	8
Shipyards	10	Drum and can plants	8
Rubber-processing plants	6	Airfields	15
Oil refineries	10	Gun emplacements	16
Metal working plants	3	Army departments	4
Building material plants	16	Depots and dumps	86
Transport facilities	1	Warehouses	20
Photographic plants	15	Miscellaneous installations	42

Of this total a large number could be listed as major war industries due to the extent of the installations, the number of workers employed during peak production or by the nature of the products manufactured. Many of the plants and factories throughout the sector, however, had been rendered useless by the heavy B-29 attacks and by the carrier-borne air strikes carried out by Allied naval forces not long before VJ-day.

One oil refinery in Kawasaki, for example, was found to be 90 per cent destroyed. All of the plant's cracking towers had been severely damaged. One large storage tank was smashed and almost completely flattened; the others were full of holes. On a siding inside the plant a dozen railway tankcars were found pierced and peppered with holes as a result of careful strafing by naval aircraft. Salvageable within the plant's offices, nearly completely destroyed by bombs, were few items, outstanding among which was a delicate chemical balance which survived the attacks in a sheltered corner of the laboratory.

Inspection teams roaming through the factories could hardly help but wonder how the Japanese ever hoped for complete success against the industrial might of the Allies. In one of the main industrial centers in Japan few factories could match, at best, the normal output of an average, relatively insignificant American counterpart. Yet with all their less efficient and slower methods of production the Japanese, with typical Oriental determination, managed to produce far more than one might have expected in view of their limited resources.

The Japanese Army had been actively engaged in demobilization proceedings during September. The 12th Area Army, in and around Tokyo, left only small garrisons to guard each post, camp and station until U.S. forces were able to take over control. The remaining forces were withdrawn to be discharged and sent home. On August 18, after Hirohito had announced acceptance of the Potsdam ultimatum, 573,300 officers and men were assigned to the 12th Area Army. On October 1, a little more than six weeks later, only 6 per cent of the original command, 34,035 troops, remained on duty.

Japanese garrisons met at the many military and naval installations often times demonstrated intense desires to be relieved of their duties and to return to their homes. In one case an impatient officer, the commander of a small detachment guarding an antiaircraft position in Yokohama, presented himself to a staff officer at the 246th Field Artillery headquarters and aired his complaint.

Through his interpreter, an attractive Japanese girl, he asked why the Americans in the area had not sent a force to take over the installa-

tion. "My soldiers have been in the Army a long time," he fussed. "They want to be demobilized. I want to go home, too!" He and his fifteen men were promptly relieved and sent on their way.

By the end of September the strength of Eighth Army had grown substantially. Now comprised of IX, XI, and XIV Corps, General Eichelberger's forces included the Americal Division, the 1st Cavalry Division in Tokyo, the 27th Infantry Division in and around Niigata, the 11th Airborne Division at Sendai and the 81st Infantry Division at Aomori. Also included in Eighth Army and XI Corps troop lists was the 97th Infantry Division, with headquarters at Kumagaya, a short distance northwest of Tokyo.

The 97th Division, on arrival in Japan on September 24, became the first infantry division to reach the Pacific from Europe under redeployment plans put into effect at the close of the war against Germany in May. The 97th's first mission was to relieve the veteran 43d Infantry Division, now scheduled for movement as a unit to the United States for inactivation.

The movement of the 43d Division to the United States was now being felt by the Americal. Under readjustment regulations, the more familiar "point system," put into effect shortly after VE-day, high-point officers and men eligible for discharge were transferred to the 43d Division before departure time. In turn, the 43d sent its low-point personnel to Eighth Army units including the Americal, for continued service in Japan until these latter men would become eligible for discharge.

The departure of the 43d Division for the United States on September 28 marked the beginning of the grand-scale movements designed to send the maximum number of eligible officers and men home in the shortest possible time. The 4th Replacement Depot sprang into existence in Eighth Army's area to handle troops heading for home as casualties under this program.

As the early days of October passed the experienced strength of the Americal Division was gradually diminishing. New officers and men from other Eighth Army units and from the 4th Replacement Depot joined the Division to keep units in efficient operating condition. The assigned work still had to be done.

On October 1, in accordance with a policy previously established, elements of the Fifth Air Force relieved the 164th Infantry guards at Showa airfield. Other airfields and Japanese Air Force installations were to be transferred to U.S. Army Air Forces units in a similar manner.

On the same morning the 164th Infantry was called upon to under-

take a reconnaissance of Nagano Prefecture, northwest of the Division zone. The entire prefecture was to be covered, all major roads were to be examined, the number of Japanese military installations and the type of each were to be reported and potential troop-housing areas were to be found.

The reconnaissance began on the next day when Company I of the 164th, accompanied by ordnance and engineer officers, left the company command post by truck. Four days later, through Division and regimental channels, the company was ordered withdrawn when it was found that the 97th Division was to be assigned control of the prefecture. Company I returned with a complete report on October 8 and all of the information obtained was passed on to the commanding general of the 97th Division.

Meanwhile, on October 2, in Yokohama, the 531st Military Police Battalion, attached to Americal Division Artillery for duty in the city, assumed control of guards around the 43d Field Hospital. Inside the hospital, hovering near death, lay Gen. Hideki Tojo, former Prime Minister of Japan. In an effort to prevent being taken prisoner and tried for war crimes, Tojo had shot himself as his captors prepared to enter his home near Tokyo. His aim was not quite accurate enough, however, for he was destined to live and face judgment for his crimes.

The guard around the hospital was taken off on October 7 when medical officers determined that Tojo's condition was such that he could now be moved safely to a nearby prison which harbored other war criminals awaiting trial.

Even though the initial air of tension regarding the occupation of the Japanese homeland had long been relaxed by the widespread cooperation on the part of the population as a whole, the situation was still a tactical one. In view of this aspect, the commanding general of XI Corps ordered his divisions to prepare plans which would become effective immediately upon the outbreak of organized resistance or civilian disorders on a large scale.

Fundamentally, Allied personnel, installations and bivouac areas were to be protected. Offensive action would be initiated only if any act on the part of Japanese civilian or military personnel, as a group, seriously threatened the maintenance of law and order. Sector commanders were to coordinate emergency action plans with the commanders of all other units bivouacked within their zones.

Drawing these plans only emphasized that all combat units of the Americal, under previously issued orders, were required to be in a

constant state of readiness for action. It was pointed out that no act on the part of the Japanese, individually or collectively, brought about the preparation of these emergency plans.

As a matter of record, during October only two isolated incidents of minor unfriendly actions by Japanese occurred in the Division's sector. On the night of October 3 a person or persons unknown fired on a guard near Sagami Arsenal. The guard returned the fire with undetermined results. Early on the morning of October 14 two hand grenades or explosive charges were thrown at a 132d Infantry guard near Sakawa. In neither case was an American soldier wounded or injured and no Japanese were apprehended.

On October 8 higher headquarters cracked down on one of the most insidious wartime functions of the Japanese Government when orders were issued to place guards on all Thought Control sections of the local police departments. This was quickly accomplished throughout Kanagawa Prefecture by the Americal and all Thought Control records were impounded. Three days later all routine records were released to the local authorities, but those dealing with investigations, arrests and imprisonments under Thought Control laws were collected for detailed study.

It was found that during the war the Japanese people had been granted virtually no freedom of thought; the government had invaded the very minds of its people. In those days one could have been sent to prison for stating that he thought even the least ill of his own government. Under the first directive issued by the Supreme Commander these Thought Control laws were abolished and the people were granted their first postwar freedom.

As the Thought Control stations shut down, 132d Infantry began searching for fabulous stores of silver reportedly hidden in the Americal's zone. The commander of the 132d sent special troops to Odawara to investigate evidence of hoards of silver bars somewhere in the town. In a small private warehouse located near the coast 102 bars of solid silver were found and placed under guard.

An interrogation of the warehouse owners revealed that the silver had been stored at Osaka, two hundred miles to the west. Japanese naval police, at the end of the war, moved the bars to the Odawara warehouse, probably in the hope that some of it might be salvaged for personal use in later months or years. Two days after its seizure, the silver was moved to the 132d Infantry command post at Hiratsuka before being disposed of under orders from General MacArthur's headquarters.

On October 11, the 164th Infantry went on a silver search of its own, moving westward into Yamanishi Prefecture to do so. One rifle company sped to Kusakabe, to the northeast of Kofu, prefectural capital, to take control of a warehouse alleged to harbor a vast supply of silver. Civilians in the area, many of whom may have known of the silver cache, were evasive and deceitful as they passed on much misleading information to interrogators. The local police, however, seemed only too happy to cooperate.

When finally located, the warehouse was found to contain 2,660 bars of silver, a total of 102.5 tons. This seizure now raised the amount of the precious metal taken by troops of the Division in three days to 2,762 bars weighing 106 tons.

An investigation into the manner in which the silver had reached Kusakabe revealed little at first. It was learned that it had been shipped to a local consignee by a large express company and only under pressure did the receiver reveal any detailed information. He subsequently implicated the assistant manager of the express company as having been a party to the clandestine transfer and storage of the silver.

The express company official was apprehended with little delay. More so than had been any other civilian involved in the affair, the assistant manager was extremely uncooperative during the opening stages of his interrogation. When finally faced with the threat that his company would be closed for a complete and thorough investigation of the incident, he reluctantly began giving the necessary information. Within a short time a complete file on the case had been drawn up and forwarded, through channels, to the Supreme Commander's headquarters for action.

Both silver cases came to a close on October 23 when the Division was instructed to transfer the 2,762 bars to the Bank of Japan in Tokyo. Under heavy guard the 132d Infantry moved its store of silver to the bank by truck on the same afternoon. The 164th Infantry began shuttling its hoard to Isawa for shipment to Tokyo by rail. By the afternoon of October 27 all of the silver had been moved to Tokyo and placed in the bank's guarded vaults.

Meanwhile, several minor boundary alterations and changes of responsibility had been carried out. On October 9 the 97th Infantry Division took over control of Sayama air base from the 164th Infantry. Far to the south the 221st Field Artillery withdrew its guards at the Koga ammunition dumps when relieved by Eighth Army's 95th Ordnance Battalion. On October 4 the 57th Engineer Combat Battalion opened a three-day demolition school, the main purpose of which was to instruct

selected officers and men in the most practicable manner of destroying the many items of Japanese military equipment which was scattered throughout the sectors. Virtually every known piece of equipment was discussed, together with techniques of efficiently placing explosive charges. After October 6 each Division unit had at least one well trained demolition team.

These teams were quickly put to work on the following week as the tools of the defeated war machine were set for destruction. Venturing cautiously at first, the groups began blasting camps, gun emplacements, radar stations and other items of equipment in an ever-increasing tempo. In all parts of the Division's zone coordinated explosions were soon crippling and leveling six-gun 12cm antiaircraft batteries in one blow. Ton after ton of scrap iron and steel quickly piled up in what were once potent defenses on Kanto Plain. One artillery battalion demolition team in Kawasaki destroyed over a hundred tons of enemy matériel in one day's operations.

In a somewhat futile effort to keep the Americal in a state of training for any eventuality, a limited training program was initiated for all units in the early days of October. Four hours per day, five days a week, were set aside for individual and unit training. In addition, officers and noncommissioned officers schools were opened during off-duty hours. On the whole, however, occupation duty requirements kept all but a few officers and men from attending the scheduled classes.

Into a series of rumors concerning the immediate and long-range future of the Americal dropped a radiogram from XI Corps headquarters on October 14. The message dispelled all unofficial reports that the Division was to remain in Japan "forever," or, for old times' sake, that it was to be shipped back to New Caledonia, its birthplace, to be inactivated. In effect, the message stated, the Americal Division was now listed as a Category IV unit. Under current readjustment regulations this meant redeployment to the United States for prompt inactivation. The Americal was going home!

This heartening news naturally created a flurry of excitement throughout all units of the Division. Cries of "when?" "how soon?" and "I've been packed for months" were to be heard everywhere.

Despite the official word, however, much more work remained to be done before the Division could be relieved. Much more enemy matériel had to be destroyed. Other matériel had to be collected and disposed of. Meanwhile, readjustment regulations were exacting a heavy toll on the Americal as trained veterans were being hurriedly transferred

to the 4th Replacement Depot for shipment to the United States as casualties. The news of the Americal's planned redeployment succeeded only in adding many more operational and administrative headaches to those already being suffered by key staff and command personnel.

In Division G-3's office the next day, October 16, the G-3 of the 1st Cavalry Division met with Lt. Col. Lothar B. Sibert to draw up plans for the relief of the Americal Division. According to general plans the relief was to be a progressive one. As shipping would become available in Yokohama, designated units of the Americal were to be relieved by troops of the 1st Cavalry Division in order to load and leave for the United States.

On arrival in the Americal Division sector, relieving units of the 1st Cavalry Division were to pass to the control of the Americal's Commanding General. Step by step the cavalry units were to move into the Division zone to take over from the regiments and battalions. Finally, when all relieving units were in place, the commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division, would assume control.

As the Americal began preparing for the voyage home, negotiations were opened with the Japanese Home Ministry for the transfer of foodstuffs and other staple items rapidly deteriorating in warehouses throughout the zone. During the last half of the month of October representatives of the Home Ministry, accompanied by appointed officers from Division units, inventoried and accepted on-the-spot delivery of many sorely needed items of civilian supply.

In addition to the food now being turned over to the Home Ministry, many other items were located, inventoried and transferred to the Japanese. In all, the Home Ministry received:

Foodstuffs	2,500 tons
Clothing	548 tons
Aluminum	1,036 tons
Brass	650 tons
Bronze	104 tons
Copper	781 tons
Scrap iron and steel	36,729 tons
Silk	100 tons
Oil	4,582 barrels
Grease	18,000 gallons
Gasoline	140,340 gallons
Blankets, sheets, etc.	47,000 pieces

Added to this list were 697 automotive vehicles of all types, all able to move under their own power. Transportation was now in critically short supply in the home islands and each vehicle released to the local governments could be put to use without considerable delay.

Furthermore, 12,926 machines of all types were released to the Home Ministry. The great majority of these were located in severely damaged factories and machine shops and nearly all of them were in operating condition.

For the most part the scrap iron and steel was salvaged from destroyed Japanese war matériel. By the time the destruction was ordered halted in the Division's sector, a truly creditable score had been amassed by the hard-working demolition teams. In a few short weeks of work, these teams had destroyed 9,360 small-bore weapons of all descriptions, 1,724 heavy guns, howitzers and anti-aircraft weapons and eleven radar stations.

Vast stores of ammunition in Japan created a great deal of trouble for the occupation troops. Because of its very nature the ammunition stockpiles could not be destroyed in place. Collection of the millions of rounds of all calibers was begun as arrangements were made with the Navy for the use of lighters and larger landing craft to take shipments out to sea. As truckloads were to be moved to the docks they were to be loaded on board the craft and later dumped at sea in waters at least three hundred feet deep.

Directives issued in connection with the collection of ammunition brought to light the perplexing problem of rail transportation in the Americal's area. Orders stated that stockpiles were to be moved by truck to the nearest railroad siding, the map location of which was to be reported to Division headquarters. This looked to be the easiest solution to the disposal problem. However, the discovery that Japanese railroads ran on various gauges, rather than on one standard gauge, sabotaged the well laid plans. The problem was finally solved by requiring that units choose sidings of a specified gauge.

On October 19, under orders from the Americal's Assistant Division Commander, Brig. Gen. Eugene W. Ridings, the 132d Infantry took into custody Heinrich Stahmer, the German Ambassador to Japan, Generalleutnant (Major General) Alfred Kretschmer, the German Military Attaché, and Ambassador Wathankan of Thailand, all of whom were found at the Fujiya Hotel in Miyano-shita. Counterintelligence agents

carried out similar raids in other parts of Kanagawa and Yamanishi Prefectures.

Two days later all civilian police within the Division's zone were instructed to collect and inventory all arms, ammunition and weapons of all types in the hands of the civilian population. With the exception of individual heirloom Samurai swords and of shotguns and rifles used solely for hunting purposes, the arms gathered up were collected and disposed of by units of the Americal.

According to word now received from XI Corps headquarters, the 1st Cavalry Division was set to begin the progressive relief of the Americal Division in Kanagawa Prefecture on October 25. The relief of the last of the Division's troops was to be completed by the evening of November 5.

Under an Eighth Army movement order the Americal was to prepare for shipment to the United States "on or about November 1." The plan envisioned the transporting of the Division by tactical units as shipping became available after the first of the month. Under any circumstances the last unit was to be clear of Japan by the end of November. With definite word now received, readjustment operations swung into high gear.

On October 22 units of the 1st Cavalry Division, three days in advance of the planned date, began the relief of infantry units in the Americal's sector. The 61st Field Artillery assumed control of the 164th Infantry area as the 82d Field Artillery took over from troops of the 182d Infantry around Hachioji and Hara-Machida. After their relief, however, the 164th maintained guards at the Fuji-View Hotel, near Funatsu, in Yamanishi Prefecture, and at Kusakabe, at which latter point the confiscated silver was still being held.

Preparing for the transfer of its control, Americal Division Artillery reshuffled its battalion boundaries on October 25 in order to squeeze out and relieve the 246th Field Artillery. Division shipping rosters listed the 246th as the first artillery battalion to be shipped to the United States.

The 97th Infantry Division pushed down from the north to take over Yamanishi Prefecture from the 164th Infantry by the evening of October 26. Guards from the 164th at Funatsu and a 182d Infantry detail at Otsuki packed up and rejoined their regiments. The 57th Engineers, however, on orders from XI Corps, continued working on the task of numbering and posting all bridges on Route 2 in the prefecture, completing this assignment on October 28.

By 0001, October 31, the 5th Cavalry had taken over the sectors occupied by the 132d and 182d Infantry Regiments as all three of the Americal's infantry units set about the task of preparing to go home. Other units of the Division were still to be relieved.

On October 31 the 531st Military Police Battalion took over all routine 246th Field Artillery guard posts to complete the relief of this battalion. Simultaneously, far to the south, the 221st Field Artillery turned over its sector to the 271st Field Artillery and elements of the 12th Cavalry. Three days later other troops of the 12th Cavalry began relieving the 245th and 247th Field Artillery Battalions as the 531st Military Police Battalion was ordered attached to the 1st Cavalry Division. By 1800 on November 3, the last units of Division Artillery had turned over control to the 1st Cavalry Division.

With this the Americal Division stood completely relieved of its last World War II assignment. Only a handful of veterans of Task Force 6814 days remained, the rest had passed on to their eternal reward or had gone on home to their loved ones. A happy voyage now awaited a mixture of veterans who were to usher the old Americal home and into history.

Mission Accomplished

THE PROGRESSIVE RELIEF OF THE AMERICAL DIVISION FROM occupation duty in Japan, initiated on October 22 in the sectors of the 164th and 182d Infantry Regiments, now provided the men of the Division with their first really free moments since arriving in Yokohama early in September. To a rather limited extent during the previous weeks personnel had been granted permission to visit Tokyo on off-duty hours. Although the newly relieved units were principally concerned with getting set for the trip to the United States, large numbers of officers and men, by various means, found their way around the countryside on shopping and sightseeing tours.

In Tokyo itself, battered by fire and explosives during American air raids, sightseeing, from the very beginning, was centered around the inaccessible Imperial Palace, sheltered by broad moats and guarded by U.S. troops and Japanese police. Behind the moats and the walls lived Hirohito, Emperor of Japan, until only recently the proclaimed descendant of the gods and the living god of Shintoism.

In late September, by his own design, Hirohito blasted the age-old myth of his god-like existence by making a personal call upon the Supreme Allied Commander. This one act served notice upon the Japanese people that their Emperor was in truth a human being, one possessed of none of the characteristics of deity, one who fully realized that his nation had been beaten. By calling upon General MacArthur in a very routine manner, Hirohito made the first step in bringing "*demokrashi*" to his country.

In another part of the scarred Japanese capital stood the impressive Imperial Diet Building, seat of the Japanese legislature. Beneath its pyramid-shaped spire, visible for miles around, the Imperial Diet had gathered in many an important wartime session.

Diagonally across the street from the Diet Building stood the official residence of the Prime Minister, active head of the Japanese Government. In the relatively small, Western-style house Hideki Tojo, the Hitler and

the Mussolini of the Orient, planned and plotted the war which was to bring ignominious defeat to his nation.

Elsewhere in Tokyo stood the palatial embassies, the modern hotels and the office buildings, all signs of the European and American influence on Japanese life. Through the heart of the city, strewn with rubble, ran The Ginza, the Fifth Avenue of Tokyo, the shopping center of the metropolis.

When the war cut off foreign tourist trade along The Ginza, shopkeepers in the large department stores and small specialty shops put aside much of their wares. Now, with the appearance on the scene of a new "tourist trade" in the persons of yen-laden troops, enterprising merchants dug out the stocks of curios and fineries "especially for General MacArthur's forces."

Hidden by a luxurious growth of trees and shrubs which once had been meticulously groomed, the U.S. Embassy stood undamaged in a quiet section of the city. On September 8, as the Americal Division began unloading at Yokohama, General MacArthur opened his first Tokyo headquarters in the Embassy. In a simple ceremony in front of the building he ordered the Eighth Army commander: "Have our country's flag unfurled, and in the Tokyo sun let it wave in its full glory as a symbol of the hope for the oppressed and as a harbinger of victory for the right." The color which was drawn up the flagpole at this moment was the one that had flown over the Capitol in Washington in December of 1941, over Rome in 1944, over Berlin the following year and over the surrender ceremonies on board the USS *Missouri* just six days before.

Eighth Army's special service office, making plans for a broad recreational program, moved into the Meiji Shrine Stadium to set up a site for inter-unit football games during the remaining months of the year. Other parts of the Meiji Shrine, too, were taken over by the occupation troops for recreational purposes.

Under this general program devotees of classical music within the Americal Division were privileged to attend concerts given by the Nippon Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra which had been inactive during most of the war. At one of these concerts, given in the Meiji Shrine Auditorium, the orchestra, composed of Japanese and displaced European nationals, presented the first postwar performance of "New World Symphony." This well known contemporary orchestral work, written partly in and dedicated to the United States by Anton Dvorák, had been banned in Japan during the war.

Far below Tokyo majestic Fuji-San rose high above the southwest

corner of Kanto Plain, attracting tourists from among the troops as it had from around the world in more peaceful days. Those who were fortunate enough to visit the area were treated to a most thrilling view of the surrounding countryside from the broad slopes of the inactive volcano.

Off in the other direction, some fifty miles to the north of Tokyo, amid particularly picturesque Japanese hills, was Nikko, noted as a prewar tourist resort. In the quiet forests around the area the recent fighting, the occupation and everything connected with World War II seemed far removed. Nikko featured Toshogu Shrine, a colorful shrine built among giant cryptomeria trees many decades before.

These places and hundreds more in and around Tokyo and Kanto Plain might well have attracted more men of the Division had it not been for the fact that the Americal was set to go home. Last-minute details needed to be straightened out and troops were ordered to stand by for loading orders at any moment.

By the evening of November 3 the first orders came. The transport *Sea Witch* was tied up at the Yokohama docks ready for the first echelon of the Americal. In preparation for this all-important event, the final edition of *The Americal*, the Division special service office's newspaper, was put aboard the ship for distribution to the troops after the embarkation.

By dawn on November 4, the last name on the passenger list had been called off and checked and the embarkation was complete. The gangplanks were taken away, the lines were cast off from the dock, and the *Sea Witch* moved out into and down Tokyo Bay. Once out to sea the transport turned to the northwest to fall into the great circle route, the shortest distance, to the United States. The first troops of the Americal Division were on their way home! The last World War II movement of the Division had begun.

Shortly after the departure of the first contingent an advance party, headed by General Arnold and his Chief of Staff, Colonel Mervyn M. Magee, left by air for the United States to make the necessary arrangements for the arrival, billeting and subsequent inactivation of the units at Seattle Port of Embarkation. Plans called for units to be stationed temporarily at either Fort Lewis or at Fort Lawton prior to inactivation. After the units had passed out of existence the resulting unassigned personnel were to be dispatched to appropriate separation centers under orders from Seattle Port of Embarkation.

Following the sailing of the *Sea Witch* on November 4, the Americal

settled down to an orderly processing of units for the movement to Seattle. As each ship was made available units were assigned space. Shipping rosters were prepared in countless copies, then checked, re-checked, corrected, revised and prepared anew. Baggage was checked once and then twice; customs claims were made out, certified, stored away and forgotten.

Within a matter of days the Americal Division was stripped of its tools of war and was transformed into an immobile, impotent shadow of its former being. Rifles, machine guns and weapons of all sorts were collected, checked and carted away. Trucks, tractors and vehicles of all types were repaired, inspected and driven off. Hundreds of other now-useless items were gathered, inventoried and turned in.

By November 17, after the USS *Admiral Coontz* had sailed, approximately half of the combat troops of the Division were clear of Japan. Operation Magic Carpet, under which thousands of surplus troops were being transported home to the United States, was moving along in high gear.

By the end of November, in accordance with the prepared plans, the last units of the Americal had moved out of Tokyo Bay en route to Seattle Port of Embarkation. For the men of the Division overseas life was done, completed.

In a very strict sense, however, the movement to the United States was, for the Americal, just another movement, another change of station. For the Division, as a unit, this marked the first assignment on the soil of continental United States. Although "home" for the Americal was New Caledonia, there was not a man in the organization who would not settle for the West Coast and the State of Washington as a suitable substitute.

In many ways the units of the Division now en route to Seattle and Tacoma hardly resembled those which had gained fame in action in these past three years. Only a handful of Task Force 6814 remained spread throughout the command and these had stayed on voluntarily. The last of the other veterans had been sent home from Cebu in August under existing readjustment regulations.

In preparation for the trip home the Americal had picked up eligible officers and men from virtually every Eighth Army unit in Japan as the ineligible men were transferred out. Units sailing from Yokohama were loaded beyond capacity with commissioned and enlisted ranks. Second lieutenants and privates were truly scarce. Alien shoulder patches outnumbered those of the Americal—patches representing the 1st Cavalry

Division, the 27th, 81st and 97th Infantry Divisions, the 11th Airborne Division, XI Corps and Eighth Army headquarters, and a hundred other subordinate organizations.

It seemed only natural that these newcomers were interested only in the *Americal* as a means of getting home, as an assignment which could possibly speed up their return to their loved ones. They had fought with their own divisions in scattered Pacific battlegrounds and had well earned this last voyage across the vast ocean. Many of the Division's last activities, therefore, were carried out by officers and men who had served with the *Americal* for longer periods.

For the old and young veterans of the *Americal* there was now much to look back upon, many miles of travel to recall, many islands to remember. They could do so with mixed emotions, for they could bring to mind the many victories that had been won and then call out in reverential recollection the names of those who paid for those victories with their lives.

The old veterans of nearly four years overseas could tell of the hectic, confusion-filled days at New York Port of Embarkation, of life aboard the crowded transports, of Melbourne, Ballarat and Bendigo, of New Caledonia where Task Force 6814 died and the *Americal* was born. Others could add tales of Guadalcanal, of days and nights of heavy enemy bombardment from the air and the sea, of the evil jungle, of the incessant rain and the sticky, stinking muck, of Henderson Field, the Matanikau, Mount Austen, Point Cruz, of a hundred other pinpoints on the map where the *Americal* was pitted against Japanese in a struggle to gain and hold the initiative.

The old and young veterans alike could speak knowingly of the colorful Hindus and Fijians, of Suva and its bazaars, of Lautoka and of the *kava* feasts given in honor of the Division. The older men could well remember the terrific malarial aftermath of Guadalcanal when few were spared at least one bout with "the bug."

Most of the younger men could join in with stories of Bougainville and its daily rainstorms. They could fight again the battle of Hill 260, the drive along the beach beyond the Torokina, the skirmishes at the outpost line, Hills 500 and 501, and in all parts of the dense, damp jungle. In their minds they could again move up the Numa-Numa trail into Laruma Valley or down the coast to the Jaba River. They could recall how peacefully Mount Bagana dominated the perimeter and Empress Augusta Bay, quietly puffing out clouds and columns of white smoke as it had for uncounted decades.

Even the younger veterans could bring out tales of the battles around

Abijao and Villaba, of tough combat assignments of Samar, Capul, Biri and Burias, of a host of other little places on and around Leyte. In the eyes of the world these had been minor mopping-up operations, but they still bore a price tag in dead and wounded. They could all tell of Victor II, of Go Chan Hill, Watt Hill, Bolo Ridge and the capture of Babag Ridge, of the battles of importance on Bohol, of the hard, drawn-out drive into the hills west of Dumaguete on Negros. A few could add accounts of the Americal's widely publicized "campaign" on Mindanao.

Many would long remember Cebu City and the Image of Santo Niño, the tiny statue of the Holy Child, Jesus, which had come to the island with Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. In the years ahead they could marvel at the fact that since 1565 the little golden-clad, angelic-faced Image had been zealously guarded by a community of Spanish Augustinian priests who had managed to keep it safe even from the Japanese.

All could remember the joy with which they received the news of the capitulation of Japan. They could well be thankful that Operation Olympic, in which the Americal was to have taken part, had been cancelled. Had Hirohito chosen to resist to the bitter end that operation might well have been a most costly one for the combat units of the Division.

Fresh in the minds of all those who now were heading for home was the satisfaction of having reached Japanese soil. The Americal Division had fought its way toward this very goal with the utmost in determination and aggressiveness in large and small-scale actions over a period of 605 campaign days. These combat characteristics, however, had been abandoned in Japan in favor of an attitude of generosity and kindness toward the conquered people.

Commenting on and paying tribute to the magnificent conduct of the occupation forces, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, in a world-wide radio broadcast from Tokyo on October 16, pointed out:

" . . . They could so easily—and understandably—have emulated the ruthlessness which their enemy freely practiced when conditions were reversed. But their perfect balance between their implacable firmness to duty on the one hand and resolute restraint from cruelty and brutalities on the other has taught a lesson to the Japanese civil population that is startling in its impact . . . [even more than] . . . the catastrophic fact of military defeat itself . . . "

In its many months of service the Americal Division "graduated" a number of experienced officers and men who went on to service in other theaters of operation. The first of these was the Division's first Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, Jr., who started up the ladder to greater fame when he took command of the new XIV Corps on Guadalcanal in January 1943. It was with justifiable pride that the Americal later read of Lieutenant General Patch and his Seventh United States Army as the Guadalcanal veteran led his troops to impressive victories over units of the Nazi war machine in the closing months of the war in Europe. Men of the Division watched with pride, too, as Lt. Gen. John R. Hodge gained fame and a promotion as commander of XXIV Corps on Leyte and Okinawa. These two, together with a host of other men in all ranks, spread the name of the Americal and its distinctive shoulder patch to all corners of the world.

At its various overseas stations the Americal Division presented its guest book to many notables for autographs on the occasions of visits. On New Caledonia Lt. Gen. (later General of the Army) Henry H. Arnold, Army Air Forces chief, headed a party of high-ranking officers on a tour of the island in September 1942. The late Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, with his helmet on backward, inspected Guadalcanal positions in January 1943.

In August 1943, Under Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson and Lt. Gen. William S. Knudsen, Director General of the Office of Production Management, stopped off at Fiji to greet the Americal Division during a Pacific tour. The pair was followed very shortly by Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, wife of the late President, who, in her visit, paid particular attention to the welfare of the hospitalized men of the Division.

Commander James J. (Gene) Tunney, of the United States Navy, former world heavyweight boxing champion, visited front-line positions on Bougainville in January 1944. The famed trans-Atlantic flyer Charles A. Lindbergh, on a tour of the Pacific as a technical adviser for Army Air Forces, stopped off at the Division command post the following May.

The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, represented by Dr. Henry B. Hazard, visited Bougainville in May 1944 to offer American citizenship to alien members of the Americal. New laws now permitted servicemen who were not citizens to apply for and be granted citizenship without filing a declaration of intention and without a long period of residence. Several groups of from ten to fifteen men of the Division took the oath of allegiance and received naturalization papers at the conclusion of the survey.

Well remembered were the stage, screen and radio stars who had performed for the Division units in all parts of the Pacific. Many men could tell of meeting Joe E. Brown on Guadalcanal and again on Cebu, of talking with Randolph Scott and little Jackie Heller on Bougainville, of the side-splitting shows put on by Bob Hope and Jack Benny on Bougainville, and of the Kay Kyser Show and the Broadway hit, "Oklahoma," on Cebu. These top-flight stars, and many more, made the long months a bit lighter and happier for all.

On the religious side, perhaps the most distinguished visitor to grace an Americal Division area was the Most Rev. Francis J. Spellman, Archbishop of New York and Military Vicar of Catholic chaplains in the armed forces. Archbishop (later Cardinal) Spellman visited the Division at Fuchinobe on September 15, 1945, only a week after its arrival in Japan, and said Mass near the Division command post for a large gathering of men.

Hardly a phase of any campaign was complete without a visit by at least one of the senior commanders under whom the Division fought. Admiral Ghormley was a frequent caller at the Americal's headquarters on Guadalcanal as was Admiral Halsey, his successor, both on Guadalcanal and Bougainville. The commanders of XIV Corps, Generals Patch and Griswold, in turn, were never strangers to the men of the Division. In the Philippines the Eighth Army commander, General Eichelberger, called upon General Arnold a number of times. During the Americal's short period of service under Sixth Army, its commander, General Krueger, made a tour of inspection of the units on Cebu. The commanders of X and XI Corps, Generals Sibert and Hall, respectively, were often seen in Division areas in the Philippines and in Japan.

Of all the military visitors, however, one stands out above all others—General MacArthur. On April 19, 1945, just after the Japanese had been forced to vacate strategic Babag Ridge on Cebu, the Southwest Pacific chief, accompanied by General Eichelberger, came to the island for a trip around the lines. Led up into the hills by General Arnold, General MacArthur could look back down toward Cebu City from which point the Americal had initiated its hard-fought but fruitful drive. Cognizant of the advantages the Japanese had enjoyed in the hills, General MacArthur unhesitatingly congratulated General Arnold and his men on the overwhelming victory which had been scored.

These things and many more the men of the Americal could now recall as they neared the Pacific Coast on their last ocean voyage of World War II. To these they could add a hundred stories of men in action, of

humorous incidents, of the warm, green-beer rations, of Christmas in the tropics and of life in general with the Division.

On November 19, out of the almost ever-present mists which hang over the Pacific Northwest, the *Sea Witch*, bearing the first echelon of the Americal Division, steamed into Puget Sound, moved south and eased into the Seattle dock area. As the ship tied up at the pier a band blared forth a welcome. Groups of well-wishers gathered inside the pier to greet the debarking troops.

After squads, platoons and companies had struggled happily down the gangplanks under heavy loads of souvenir-filled barracks bags, local Red Cross workers presented each officer and man with a half-pint of milk and a pair of fresh doughnuts. No more suitable liquid refreshment could have been provided, for most of the men had not had fresh milk since leaving the United States months or years before. Even the most experienced unit cooks overseas had not been able to produce the real thing out of the flat-tasting powdered milk.

Once the milk and doughnuts had been downed, the troops were ushered into waiting trucks and sped over smooth, broad highways to quarters in Fort Lawton and Fort Lewis. A short time later delicious hot meals were served for the men in the posts' messhalls.

In keeping with a well established Army "tradition," a number of "bulletins" had been issued prior to debarkation outlining the customs of the land which the men were about to enter. By means of this pre-landing "indoctrination," all were quite familiar with the way the people would look, how they would act, the language they would speak and with all phases of life in the country. As a result, the early phases of the Americal's "invasion" of Seattle Port of Embarkation went off without a hitch.

As they had to other troops returning from the Pacific, the people of the Seattle-Tacoma area extended generous and hearty greetings to the officers and men of the Division. Welcome signs were conspicuously posted in both cities. Date-hungry troops found fertile fields of endeavor in the cities' bars, restaurants and gathering places.

Northeast Fort Lewis Staging Facility and Fort Lawton Staging Area posted huge welcome signs across the entrances to the posts. The November 20 issue of the Fort Lawton *Processor* was dedicated to the Americal with feature stories and pictures of the Division. In an official welcome published on the front page of the camp paper, Col. P. B. Parker, commanding officer of Fort Lawton Staging Area, said:

“ . . . It is our hope that in some small way and with our meager facilities we may contribute to the happiness which you so richly deserve now and in the future . . . ”

Efficient handling and processing of the units of the first echelon quickly set in. By 2400 on November 24, 1945, the 164th Infantry, the 21st Reconnaissance Troop and the 246th Field Artillery Battalion had been inactivated. Personnel of these three units, now orphaned by the inactivation orders, made ready to move to separation centers in all parts of the nation on the next-to-the-last leg of the journey back to civilian life.

With mere slips of paper now, the Seattle port staff began to accomplish what the Japanese had not been able to on Guadalcanal, on Bougainville and on many another island in the Pacific. Without offering the slightest resistance, the Americal Division was being written out of existence.

By November 26 the second echelon had sailed into Puget Sound, had docked and been shifted to billets in the Fort Lawton-Fort Lewis area and had been inactivated. Once this had been done, General Arnold found that he had forever lost the 132d Infantry and the 221st and 245th Field Artillery Battalions. In the event of an emergency he could now muster only one regimental combat team.

On the morning of December 1, even before all troops of the first and second echelons had moved out of the area en route to separation centers, the third echelon arrived in Seattle and moved to Northeast Fort Lewis Staging Facility for processing. By midnight of the following day three more units of the Americal had been dropped from the rosters as the 182d Infantry, and the 121st Medical Battalion and 57th Engineer Combat Battalion were also inactivated.

Within eight more days the fourth echelon had arrived at Seattle, had been billeted, processed and inactivated. With the passage into history of the 247th Field Artillery Battalion, the 26th Signal Company, the 125th Quartermaster Company and the 721st Ordnance Light Maintenance Company, the Americal was stripped to the bone. There now remained under the Division banner only five units where there once had been eighteen:

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Americal Division
Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Americal Division Artillery
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops
Military Police Platoon, Americal Division
Band, Americal Division

Finally, in accordance with special orders issued through Seattle Port of Embarkation, at 2359—one minute before midnight—on December 12, 1945 these last units of the Division were retired to the lists of inactive World War II United States Army units. At the age of three years six months seventeen days, the Americal Division, war-born child of and successor to Task Force 6814, passed into history quietly and without ceremony at this instant at Fort Lewis, Washington.

Within a week after the inactivation of the last units of the Division, all troops had been shipped to separation centers en route to their homes and their loved ones. By Christmas Day, 1945—the first peacetime Christmas in five years—service in the Americal had become only a memory in the minds and hearts of some forty thousand men who had served in it during its lifetime.

This was the story of the Americal Division. This had been World War II. Ahead for all of us now lay the fervent hope that the peace which our honored dead bought with their lives might be a lasting one, the hope that our sons and theirs might never again be required to take up arms to defend our most precious heritage, the American way of life.

Appendix

In Memoriam

In an address given at the U.S. Military Cemetery on Bougainville on Memorial Day of 1944, Maj. Gen. Robert B. McClure, then commander of the Americal Division, brought forth a message which we may well take to heart today.

WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY IN THIS AMERICAN CEMETERY, thousands of miles from our homeland, in respect and memory of our fellow soldiers who have died on this island. Without distinction as to creed or heritage we offer our united prayers in their behalf to our Maker. And as we pray that their sacrifices may not have been in vain we grieve for their loss as we would for our own sons and brothers.

As we look over this quiet and Christian scene, so peaceful now in the morning light, these brave and dauntless dead seem to answer us and say: "Grieve not! We have lived to the full our youthful lives and are satisfied that our sacrifices and efforts will make for a better world among men. We fought to preserve forever those ideals, institutions and freedoms, which in the privacy of our hearts we call America. There can be no real tragedy in dying such—unless they are lost. Grieve not, brothers, friends and comrades: keep up the fight."

We will keep up the fight and we ask Almighty God for a share of their strength, loyalty, bravery and willingness for self-sacrifice. If we can thus infuse ourselves with the essence of their spirit, they will truly never die, but will live forever with us, strengthening and guiding us in the fight ahead. Then we will be loyal to these gallant men and we pledge to them that they have not died in vain for America. Battles are won by those who fall.

Honor Roll

Headquarters & Headquarters Company

Tec 5 Wilbur K Chester
1st Lt Richard M Combs
2d Lt James F Crowley
Tec 4 William F Dennis
Pfc Riley W Hayes
Pfc Renes F Hitchcock

Military Police Platoon

Tec 4 Francis W Ferguson
Pfc Noel C King

21st Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop

Capt Johnson B Allen
Cpl Edward C Becher
Pfc Jack R Brodsky
1st Lt Gordon E Burt
1st Lt Philip H Doherty
Pvt Jack R Gibler
Sgt William H Jackle
Pfc Felix F Jurek
Pfc Alex C Kuk
Tec 5 Lloyd F Melson
Sgt Richard W Orman
Sgt Howard S Redfield

2d Lt Richard P Skarvedt
1st Sgt Charles F Strazishar
Sgt Joseph V Toner
Pvt Wayne G Woolley

57th Engineer Combat Battalion

2d Lt Charles A Barkman
Pvt Arthur H Bills
Tec 5 Leslie E Davis
Pvt George W Fulkerson
Pvt Walter F Hunt
Cpl Joseph D Lowery
Pfc John J McGuire
Pfc Stuart S Tanner
Pvt Lloyd P Taylor
Pvt Ted J Slonina

121st Medical Battalion

Pvt James W Kelton Jr

125th Quartermaster Company

Pfc Marvin D Hearn
1st Lt James P Pappas
Pvt John F Ridgeway Jr
Pvt James W Sudsbury

This list was taken from official records on file in the Department of the Army and is as complete as can possibly be compiled at the time of going to press. The Department of the Army hopes to have completely accurate rosters compiled at some future date, but from all present indications this date is a long way off. We have done our very best and humbly apologize for any and all omissions of names and and other errors. THE AUTHOR

132d Infantry Regiment

Pfc Stanley Anthony
Cpl Steve P Aramian
Pfc Emory D Armstrong
Pfc Charles A Arnold
Pvt John Aureli
Pfc Bruno Avon
Pvt Sven G Bagger
St Sgt Joseph M Baker
Pfc Robert F Baker
Pvt Melvin G Ballor
Pfc Donald E Bard
Pvt Robert L Barksdale
Pfc Joe T Barnes
Pvt John A Barnes
Pvt Dominic L Barone
Pfc Basil Barrall
Pfc Joseph C Bassani
Cpl Frank P Becker
Pfc James E Becker
Pfc Richard W Becker
Cpl Sidney Becker
Pfc Lonnie O Bell
Pfc Robert L Bellach
Pvt Elman R Belshe
Sgt Arne Bendiksen
Sgt George F Bergbower
Pvt Arthur F Beton
Cpl Ervin M Bickwermert
Pfc Charles J Bierbrodt
Pfc John T Billings
Cpl Amelio J Biondi
Pvt Francis D Bird
Pfc Casimir T Black
Pfc Gerald J Blackburn
Pvt Meyer Blumenthal
1st Lt James F Bowersox
1st Sgt Jack L Boyer
Sgt John T Brauning
Pvt Jesse E Brickey
Pfc Alvin L Brooks
Pfc John W Brooks

Pvt Russell Broughton
Pvt Arthur J Brown
Pfc Carl W Brown
Pfc Vito Busalacchi
Pfc Joseph L Butcher
Pfc Edward S Bywalec
Pvt Howard E Callaway
Pfc Daniel S Carolus
Pfc Daniel C Carr
Pvt Woodvul Carroll
Pfc John R Case
Pvt Luther M Casebolt
Pvt John Cellini
Pfc Russell P Cepko
1st Lt Harold E Chadwick
Pfc David F Clamp Jr
2d Lt Thomas E Clark
Pfc Willie L Clark
Pfc James T Close
Pfc Joseph V Codenys
Pfc Ray G Cole
Sgt William A Collins
Pfc Hermann F Conkle
Pfc Charles B Couger Jr
Pfc Russell L Courtier
Pvt Laurence V Crane
Pfc Frank T Crawley
Pfc John W Creel
Pfc James R Crosby
Pfc James E Crowder
Pvt Peter R Cuevas
Tech Sgt Albert Cundari
Pvt Eugene A Cunningham
Pvt Albert E Cutlip
Pfc Robert F Dandaneau
Sgt Maurice L DeCook
Pfc Norman D DeJager
Pvt Arthur DeMaria
Sgt Wilbur J DeRossett
Pfc Whitney J Debetaz
Pfc Elwin J Debreau
St Sgt Elwyn C Decker
Sgt Milan Dejml

Cpl John Deksins
 1st Lt William A Delony
 Pfc Harry F Denny
 Pvt Cornelius A Diehl
 Pvt Clifford C Dixon
 Pvt Bernard Dopko
 St Sgt Elmer G Dort
 Pfc Thomas J Doyle
 Pfc Arthur A Drach
 Pfc George J Drobnack
 Pfc Charlie Drost
 Pvt Albert J DuBois
 Tech Sgt Ernest H Duda
 Pvt Delbert E Dunbar
 Pvt John R Duncan
 Pfc Bernard E Dundore
 Pfc Robert W Dunn
 Pvt Joseph Q Edwards
 Pvt LeRoy C Emery
 Pfc Warren H Endicott
 Cpl Forest A Engles
 Pfc Paul E Entrekin
 Pfc Donald R Fandel
 Pfc Gus A Fazio
 Pfc Victor E Feldhausen
 Pfc James Ferguson Jr
 Pfc Jack E Ferguson
 Pfc Angelo M Fiori
 Sgt Paul L Fischer
 Pfc Edward E Fisher
 Pvt Philip H Fisher
 Pfc Robert J Fisher
 Sgt William Fisher
 Sgt Robert E Fitzsimmons
 Pfc Emilio P Fiume
 Pvt Earl M Floyd
 Pvt John J Fontana
 Pfc Floyd M Fousek
 Sgt J T Fowler
 Pfc James M Fowler
 St Sgt Gail E Fox
 Sgt Marvin L Frank
 Pfc John L Franklin

Pvt Anthony J Frano
 Pfc Jacob A Frazier
 Pvt Isadore Freemond
 Pvt Frank C Fryza
 Pvt Ralph A Fusco
 Pfc James Q Ganus
 Pvt Andrew Garcia
 Pfc George C Garms
 Pvt Floyd H Garner Jr
 Pfc William G Gately
 Pvt Donald J Gedye
 Pvt Ely M Geller
 St Sgt Leonard Glerum
 Sgt Richard N Goad
 Pvt Raymond Gralak
 Cpl Gerald J Grant
 Pfc Martin J Grbac
 1st Lt Allen W Green
 Pfc Clark O Green
 Pfc Stanley E Green
 Pfc Ralph G Greenstein
 St Sgt Nathan Greese
 Lt Col James L Grier
 Tech Sgt Nicholas M Grimaldi
 Pfc Lewis Grubb
 Pfc Joseph C Guarascio
 Sgt Harry L Gullans
 2d Lt Frank M Hadden
 Sgt Edward G Halac
 Sgt Don C Hall
 2d Lt William J Hall
 2d Lt Kenneth F Hamilton
 Pfc Lawrence Hamilton
 Tech Sgt Lowell D Hammersley
 Pfc Curlie H Hammonds
 Pvt Charles R Hanes
 Pfc Gilbert A Hanley Jr
 Pfc Robert E Hanna
 Pvt Morris Hannon
 Capt Arthur G Hantel
 Pfc Philip T Harding
 Pfc Charles W Harrell
 Cpl Charles E Harrison

Pvt George P Hartman
Pfc Jack D Harwell
Pvt Roger M Hatfield
Pfc Silas T Hauge
1st Lt Arlie D Hawkins
Cpl Ralph Hedemark Jr
Cpl Victor L Heimbuch
Pfc John P Henry
Pvt Robert G Hensley
St Sgt Herbert J Herr
St Sgt Elmer P Heseman
Pvt William G Hesslau
Pfc John E Hicks
Pfc W D Higginbotham
Pvt Edward J Higgins
Pvt Clarence H Hillmer
Pfc John W Hodges
Pfc James M Hope Jr
Pfc Evvern Hoskins
Tec 4 Robert L Hough
Tec 5 Bill G Huber
Pfc Lorin F Hueckstaedt
Pvt Wayne J Huff
Pvt William M Hughes
Pfc William R Hummell
St Sgt Hugh S Huntley
Sgt George R Huston
Pfc William Irla
Pvt Benjamin F Jakubik
Sgt James A Jarman
Pvt George R Johnson
Pvt Paul C Johnson
Pvt Roy L Johnson
Pvt William O Johnson
Pfc Harold Jordan
Pfc John J Jorden
Pvt Martin P Joyce
Pfc Peter J Judis
Pvt Anthony Kasmauskas
Pfc Edward L Kastorff
Pvt Clyde J Keller
Pfc Lovyl L Kimball
Pfc Woodrow P Kimpton

Pvt Warren D King
St Sgt Louis V Kinney
Pvt Francis J Kirka
Pfc John L Kline
Pfc Stephen Kmosena
Cpl Roy H Knoke
2d Lt Robert E Knorr
Tec 4 Edward Kolczak
Capt Louis Komaromy
Pfc Ralph J Kotze
Pfc William V Krasner
Pfc Donald C Kruhm
Cpl Walter Kruszcynski
Cpl Edward J Krygowski
Pfc Chester C Kubik
Sgt Eugene Kubnick
Pfc Alex C Kuk
St Sgt Milton Kukac
Pfc Bruce J LaPointe
Pfc Harold R Lackey
Pfc Marvin R Lambert
1st Lt Walter S Lanford Jr
Pfc Thomas A Langved
Pvt Kenneth L Lanier
Pfc Donald R Larsen
Pfc William L Larsen
Pfc Alfred C Laviano
Pvt Eugene E Laws
Pvt Claude W Lee
Pvt Vincent L Leonardo
Pfc Edward J Lichowski
Pvt Lloyd A Lindberg
Pfc Frank T Lisiecki
Pvt Stanley F Link
Sgt John E Litscher
Pfc James C Lynam
Pvt George Lyons
Pvt Stanley A Mach
Pvt Leo J Markarian
Pvt Silvio A Markase
Pvt Charles F Massey
Pvt Harold W Massie
Pfc Donnell F McBride

2d Lt Edwin J McClellan Jr
 Pvt Malcolm W McGlashan
 Pfc William E McGraw
 Pfc Maurice F McHattie
 Pvt Earl McIntosh Jr
 Pfc Harrison J R McKim
 Pfc Boyd E McKinney
 Pvt Murrill McNeil
 Sgt James R Mead
 Pfc William B Mele
 Pfc Robert G Metzenberg
 Pfc Romaine Metzner
 Pfc Charles J Miller
 St Sgt Ernest C Miller
 Pfc Harold J Miller Jr
 Tec 5 Herman L Miller
 Pfc Jewel J Miller
 Pfc Robert G Miller
 Pfc Jack D Mitchell
 Pvt Julian C Mitchell
 Pfc William H Molloy
 Pfc Joseph M Moloney
 Sgt Carol O Monson
 Pvt James R Montange
 Pfc Leonard S Montezuma
 Tec 5 Melvin A Moorhous
 Pfc Jay C Morgan
 Pfc Thomas E Narsutis
 Capt Frank W Nehls
 Pfc Kenneth R Nelk
 Sgt Charles E Nelson
 Pfc Paul Y Nelson
 Pfc Linnus B Newby
 Pfc Buford E Newman
 1st Lt Thurston H Nolen Jr
 Pfc Frank S Norris Jr
 Pfc Alred O Norwood
 Pfc Ted F Nothwang
 Pfc Leslie W Noxon
 Pvt Joe R Nunez
 Pfc Eugene P Nuziard
2d Lt Leonard W Ochs
 Pfc Thomas H Ogden

Pvt Byron R Olcott
 Pfc Salvatore Oliverio
 Pvt John E Olsen
 1st Sgt James J O'Rourke
 Pfc Joseph N Palagano
 Pvt Raymond J Pallasch
 Pvt John Pandrea
 Pfc Albert A Paris
 Pfc William W Pashon
 Pfc Emil Pavlovich
 Pfc Eugene Payne
 Pfc Floyd Pearson
 Sgt Kenneth H Pearson
 Pfc Horace L Pelley
 Pvt Russell K Pence
 Pfc Elmer Pennington
 Pfc John Peroglio
 Pfc Russell J Peterson
 St Sgt George R Pfeifer
 Pfc William S Phelan
 Pfc Earl M Phillips
 Pfc Philip H Pinon
 Pfc Joseph J Pluchinski
 Sgt Amos H Poland
 Pfc George J Pollak
 Pfc Harold Pomsovy
 Pfc Andrew G J Ponzurick
 St Sgt Cledus F Potts
 Pvt Robert G Powell
 St Sgt Clarence F Powers
 Pfc Edward J Powicki
 Pfc Joe J Protz
 Pfc Lester W Purcell
 Pfc Kenneth A Quigley
 St Sgt Robert Quirk
 Pfc Howard L Rasnick
 Cpl Charles E Raum
 Pfc Irwin W Redemann
 Pfc Lawrence P Reynolds
 2d Lt Walter E Rice
 Pfc Raymond Richard
 Pvt Bennie O Richards
 Pfc William Richie

Cpl Clarence L Rife
Pfc James E Rigel
Pvt George J Riley
Sgt Gustav P Riske
Tec 4 George K Ritter
Pfc Gustavo E Rivas
St Sgt John E Rod
Pfc Durward L Rosenberg
Sgt Eugene E Rosenberry
Cpl John W Ross
1st Lt Robert N Rudelic
Pvt Harry Ruer
Pvt Manfred P Runte
Pfc Henry H Safford
Pfc Ascencion G Salazar
Pvt Bennie Salis
Pvt Martin C Sandbank
Pfc Walter A Sander
Pvt Philip G Scarduzzio
Sgt Henry C Schlau
Pvt Raymond F Schulz
Pvt Alfred S Schutte Jr
1st Lt Wm R Schweikert
Pfc Robert A Scisorek
Pfc Ollie M Scott
Pfc Lester W Seaber
2d Lt Curtis L Sebastian
Pfc Harold L Seegers
Pvt Emil Segneri
Pvt George H Selders
Pvt William W Self
Sgt Kenneth V Sell
Pvt William Shearer
1st Lt Gilbert H Sidenberg
Pfc Chalmers W Simpson
Sgt James H Sims
Sgt John P Singleton
Pfc Audrie L Sitze
1st Sgt Louis T Skalniak
Pvt Billy H Smith
Pfc Russell F Smith
Sgt Edward B Smola
Pvt Bob R Smyers

Tech Sgt Bruce O Somers
St Sgt Francis M Spencer
2d Lt Earl Spiker
Pfc Edwin E Stade
Pfc Willis W Stahl
Pvt Walter E Stanek
Pfc Wilburn Stanford
Pfc Chester Staszak
Pfc John T Stefanek
Pfc John E Steklac
Pfc Richard C Stewart
Sgt Rudolph Stiefel
Pvt John J Svetly
2d Lt Albert D Swacina
Pfc Jack C Swaim
Tec 5 Florian M Szymanski
St Sgt John G Tammen
Pvt Thomas H Thompson
Sgt Gilbert A Tolan
2d Lt Harry S Tolen
Cpl Milton G Tomayer
Pvt William R Tomory
Tec 4 Leonard R Tourney
Pfc Theodore R Townsend
Sgt Robert J Trimble
Pvt Floyd J Trombley
Pfc Albert S Trotsky
Pfc Warren H Trumble
Pfc John A Turner
2d Lt John J Tyrrell
Pvt William C Upshaw
Cpl Joseph A Ursich
Sgt Nick Vakola
Pfc Trinidad Vasquez
Pfc Henry M Vaughan
Pfc Forest W Volkmar
Pfc Don E Wade
Pfc Boyd Walker
Pfc Walter E Walker
Sgt Gerald E Wallingford
Pvt Milford W Walls
Pvt William J Walsh Jr
Pfc John S Wardenski

Pvt Gordon H Warner
 Pfc Lyle E Watkins
 St Sgt Edward A Weaver
 Pfc John E Weaver
 Pvt William E Weaver
 Pvt Ellsworth Weisensee
 Pfc Arvil Wells
 St Sgt Daniel L White
 Pfc Roy White
 Pvt Thomas J White
 Pfc Ralph E Wilder
 Pvt Walter Wilkening
 Sgt Bill Wilson
 Pfc Thomas W Wilson
 Pfc Roscoe E Winters
 St Sgt Conrad C Wise
 Pvt Darrell B Wiseman
 Sgt William H Woodcock
 2d Lt Eugene D Woods
 2d Lt Wayne E Wrede
 Pvt Howard R Wright
 Pfc James H Wright Jr
 Lt Col William C Wright
 St Sgt William A Yarke
 St Sgt Julian N Zahary
 Pfc Howard C Zentz
 Pvt James E Zerkle
 Pfc Carl W Zimmerman
 Sgt William F Zimmerman

164th Infantry Regiment

Pfc Ralph A Abreau
 Pfc Wesley C M Adolfsen
 1st Lt Hallard D Albertson
 Pfc Boyd L Anderson
 St Sgt Emory J Anderson
 St Sgt Wesley H Anderson
 Cpl Rollie A Andrick
 Cpl Joseph W Armstrong
 Pvt Frank L Arnold
 St Sgt Lester A Ashbacher
 2d Lt Raymond W Baesler

Pfc Edward A Baffo
 St Sgt William M Bailey
 Pfc Peter Baldino
 Pvt Bernard L Barholz
 Pfc Paul R Barnes
 Pfc Martin J Barrett
 Sgt David L Beard
 Pvt William C Bearden
 Pfc Arne W Bellikka
 Sgt John R Bennett
 Pfc Alvin R Bernhoft
 Pvt Vernon A Bernstrom
 Pvt Lewis Biehler
 Pvt Clifford R Bird
 Pfc L B Bishop
 Pvt Francis E Black
 Pfc William E Blackwell
 Pvt Bernhart M Boe
 St Sgt Frank L Bohrn
 2d Lt Clarence L Bonderud
 Pfc Alfred J Bottke
 Pfc Olard H Boucher
 Sgt Andrew G Boyer
 Pfc Harvey R Brewster
 Sgt James L Brooks
 Pvt John J Brucker
 Pvt Stanley L **Buckley**
 St Sgt Robert J Burckardt
 Cpl Melvin G Busche
 2d Lt Sammie G Cain
 Pfc Alfonso A Calvaneso
 Sgt Charles R Campo
 Sgt Robert J Carenzo
 Sgt Robert W Carmichael
 Cpl William M Carney
 St Sgt Nephtale H Carter
 Pfc Al B Carroll
 Pfc Paul B Carter
 Sgt Louis A Cedrone
 Pfc Boyd C Chamley
 Pvt Harold W Childers
 Tech Sgt Orrin C Christianson
 Pfc Utah C Christopher

Pfc Henry S Ciura
2d Lt Granville D Clark
Sgt Robert J Clark
Pfc William Clewitt
Pfc Gerald E Coffey
Pfc Albert Collins
Pfc Dale W Coppens
Pfc Eldred L Cornett
Pvt Willard J Coulter
Pfc William F Courtney
1st Lt John A Crawford
St Sgt Robert C Cross
Pvt Manuel D Cuen
2d Lt George H Cummings
Pvt James H Cummings
Pfc Joseph J Cunningham
Pfc Robert A Cusson
Pvt Richard H Czapiewski
St Sgt Oland W Dahl
Pfc Pearry E Danels
Pvt Thomas J Davis
Pfc Vernie E Davis
Pfc Eugene A DeBolt
Sgt William V DeMoss
Pfc Edward M DeSouza
Pfc Charles H DeVall
Pvt Armando Del Fava
Sgt Lievin A Deman
2d Lt George R Derham
Cpl Lewis D Dibbert
Cpl Hermann C Diede
Sgt Albert L Dietl
Sgt John D Divers Jr
St Sgt Philip J Dockter
1st Lt Philip H Doherty
Pvt George H Dohn Jr
Cpl Willard P Dowsett
Pfc Matt J Dworshak
Pvt Joseph R Ebel
Pvt Carl L Edwards
Pfc Wallace L Elberg
Pvt Raymond C Estes
Sgt Erwin P Evenson

Pfc Robert W Fray
Pfc Melvin O Feiring
St Sgt Robert H Fenton
Pfc John C Finnegan
1st Sgt Winfred B Fischer
Cpl Vincent L Fish
2d Lt John R Floss
Pvt John J Flynn
Tec 4 John T Flowers
Pfc Palmer G Foss
Cpl Kenneth S Foubert
Pfc James I Fox
Pfc William S Fox
Pvt Allen C Franken
1st Lt Rudy R Franklin
Pfc Gilbert I Frisbie
St Sgt George H Fritz
Pvt Lucio M Garcia
Pfc Selmer A Garness
Pvt Manuel Garza
Sgt Jack E Geiger
Pfc Peter J Gentile
Pvt Alois M Georges
Pvt Emery F Gess
Pvt William T Goracke
Pfc LeRoy A Graf
2d Lt Arvid J Grasvik
Pfc Gould E Gray
1st Lt William J Grayson
Cpl George S Grim
Pfc Robert N Gudmundson
Pfc Troy T Gustafson
Pvt Manuel S Gutierrez
Pfc Coral L Haagenon
Pvt Gerald Hall
Pvt Kalervo G Hallila
Pvt Alfred E Halvorson
Sgt Llewellyn M Hamery
Sgt Arthur J Hanat
St Sgt Mike J Haniuk
Pfc David J Healer
Sgt Reuben Heer
Pfc Fred P Hein

St Sgt Jesus G Hernandez
 Pvt Hurston J Herren
 Pfc Carl L Hjelm
 Pvt Jay D Holcomb
 Pfc Ingolf K Holm
 Pfc Chester Holmberg
 St Sgt Ernest M Holzemer
 Sgt Raymond Holzworth
 Pvt William E Hope
 Pfc George R Howell
 Pvt Harvey E Hubbard
 Pfc Leslie C Huffstutler
 Capt William I Hunt
 St Sgt Sail E Jackman
 Pfc Henry E Jacoby
 Pvt Park E Jagears
 Sgt William E Jakle
 Tech Sgt Robert G James
 Pfc Robert D Jenkins
 Pfc Lawrence E Jennings
 Cpl Arthur O Johnson
 Tech Sgt Donald H Johnson
 Sgt Raymond W Johnson
 Pvt Francis D Jones
 Pfc Felix F Jurek
 2d Lt Ralph M Kamman
 Pfc Joseph F Kelly
 Pvt Henry C Kilgore
 Pvt George O Kinney
 Pvt Joe Kirby Jr
 Pfc Robert T Kitchen
 Sgt Donald H Klindt
 Pvt Louis E Kmiecik
 Pfc Daniel Knezovich
 Pvt Lewis E Knight
 Cpl Wilbur E Kohnke
 Pvt Paul E Kopf
 Pfc George E Kudrna
 Capt John Landdeck Jr
 1st Sgt Virgil A Lane
 Sgt Herbert W Langord
 Pvt Charlie W Latham
 Cpl Jack F Leithold

Pvt Ralph H Lewis
 2d Lt Gordon H Lindvig
 2d Lt Sidney S Linscott Jr
 Cpl Louis W Lockner
 Pfc Arthur C Lomba
 Pfc Steve Lopez
 St Sgt Wallace D Lundy
 Pfc Alfred H Mahlstedt
 St Sgt Edward F Mahowald
 Pvt Joseph A Martin Jr
 Tech Sgt Matthias Mastel
 Pfc John W McClure
 2d Lt James L McCreary
 Pvt Raymond E McKinzie
 Sgt Francis R McLaren
 Pfc John F McShane Jr
 Pvt Roy D Mercer
 Pvt Glenn Midgarden
 Pvt James R Miles
 Pvt Joseph A Miller
 Pvt Gerhard P Mokros
 Pfc Christian E Montgomery
 Pfc Walter Montgomery
 Pfc Raymond E Moore
 Pfc William N Moorman
 Sgt Clyde G Morgan
 2d Lt Rilie R Morgan
 Pvt John B Muir
 Cpl Richard C Myers
 Pfc Joseph A L Nadeau
 Pfc Peter Napoli
 Pfc Arnold B Nelson
 Sgt David E Nelson
 Pfc Adrian M Ness
 Capt George R Newgard
 Pvt Robert D Newman
 Pfc Joseph M Nimeth
 Pvt Howard O Noland
 Pfc Wenceslaus J Novotny
 Pfc Edward H Nulle
 Pvt Hugh E Obee
 Cpl Raymond O'Connell
 Pfc Hans M Odegard

St Sgt Kenneth R Olson
Pvt Sherman R Olson
Sgt Richard W Oman
Pvt Percy E O'Neal
Sgt George D Ortega
Sgt Albert J Osmon
Pvt John D Osteen
Pfc Jerry L Ottaviana
Pvt Roy R Owens
Pfc Clinton S Pacetti Jr
Capt Andrew H Panettiere
Pfc Eugene J Parenteau
Pfc Wendell A Paulson
Pfc John R Pavao
Pfc Eugene T Pawlicki
Pvt Elton L Pederson
Pvt Welford E Pemberton
Pvt Alfred Perkins
Pfc Peter Perrino
1st Lt William K Pflugrath
St Sgt Harvey J Phillips
Pvt Wenzel A Picha
Pfc William E Pinkham
Pfc Harold M Poppen
Pfc Henry J Preston
Pvt Jack Price
Pfc Marvin P Quamme
Pvt Arnold G Rahja
Pfc Millard E Rasmussen
Pfc Ralph P Reedy
Pfc Fred J Reid
St Sgt Pat G Reilly
Sgt Victor Reisenauer
Pfc Frank Resko
Pfc Roy W Reynolds
Pfc Howell D Richardson
Pfc Gerald W Roberts
Pfc John L Roberts
Pvt Gordon R Rockholt
Sgt Paul B Rockstad
1st Lt David B Rosenberg
Sgt Norman A Roy
Pvt George J Ruis

Pfc Rudolpho C Ruiz
Pfc Joseph Ryan
Pfc Vernon W Rydell
Pvt Manfred E Schmalfuss
Pvt John E Senterfeit
St Sgt Miles O Shelley
Pfc Richard L Shipe
Pfc Charles W Shockey
Pvt Joseph Shuster
Pfc James C Simpson
Pvt Tony A Simunaci
Pvt Lonnie L Sistrunk
Pvt John F Sloss
2d Lt Kermit G Sloulin
Pfc James B Sones
Pvt Victor C Spaczenski
Pvt Weldon C Spease
Pvt Joseph M Sperl
WOJG B E Starkenberg
St Sgt George H Stephenson
Pfc Frank T Steinkamp
1st Lt James J Stieffel
Pvt Charles L Stimmel
Pfc George F Strachota
Pfc Truman G Swenson
Sgt Donald A Syverson
Pfc Albert Tait
2d Lt Carl F Tetlak
Pfc Lawrence D Thieling
St Sgt Douglas W Thompson
1st Lt Tilman A Thompson
Pfc Paul Tomaski
Pvt Adam E Tomczyk
Pfc Charles B Turner
St Sgt Robert J Turner
Pfc Charles R Updegraff
Pfc Dale W Utecht
Pvt Marion Van der Werff
Pvt Murray Velcoff
2d Lt Carl E Vettel
Pvt Mardel D Vronholt
Pvt Harold F Wagner
2d Lt Egbert T Watt Jr

Pfc John R Weigel
 1st Lt Frank G Welch Jr
 2d Lt Edwin G Weld
 Tech Sgt Samuel L Wheeler
 Pfc John J White
 Pvt Samuel H Whitlock
 2d Lt Albert F Whitney
 Capt Kenneth A Williams
 Pvt Arthur C Wolff
 Pvt Ira A Woodall
 Pfc Lawrence Woodward
 Pfc Harvey L Yokom
 Pfc Omer A Young
 Pvt Steven Zakopayko
 Pvt Reynaldo S Zapata
 Pvt Harold S Zerface
 Pfc Stanley H Zizka
 Pfc Edward J Zych

182d Infantry Regiment

Pvt Dee E Abila
 Pvt Lincoln H Akerman
 Pfc Edd M Alberson
 Pvt Franklin C Alden
 Pvt Bill H Ammerman
 Pvt Walter F Andrew
 St Sgt Louis T Annese
 Pvt Francis S Ansanitis
 Pfc William H Avery Jr
 Pvt Benjamin Azarva
 Sgt John D Bancroft
 1st Lt Cleveland M Barber
 Pvt Vestal E Barber Jr
 Pvt Paul E Barnett
 Pvt Vincente B Barron
 St Sgt Arthur H Barry
 Pfc Frank Bastinelli
 Pvt Mauro J Bautista
 Pfc Russell D Beach
 Pvt Daniel H Becerra
 Pvt Ernest H Begnoche
 Pfc William H Bell

Pvt Leo Bender
 Pvt Horace A Bentley
 Pfc Rene R Bergeron
 Pfc Orfeo Bianchi
 Pfc Ernest E Bingham
 Pvt Roman E Bisek
 Pfc Clifford L Black
 Pfc Joseph A Bober
 St Sgt Dominic E Bonanno
 Pfc Francis J Boutin
 St Sgt James T Branagh
 Pvt David E Bricker
 Pfc Jack R Brodsky
 St Sgt George Brunell
 Pfc James M Buben Jr
 Pfc Grady E Burch
 St Sgt Henry J Burger
 Pfc Victor J Burgess
 2d Lt Thomas D Burke
 Pfc Doyel T Burkham
 Sgt Charles P Burrows
 St Sgt Vincent J Callahan
 Pfc Joseph J Campedelli
 Tech Sgt Jackson L Cannell
 Pvt Marion B Carawan
 Pfc Bruner A Carter Jr
 Pfc Robert A Castle
 Pvt Anthony S Cautero
 Sgt Michael P Cetola
 Sgt George T Chaignot
 Pvt Alfred L Chapman
 Sgt Milton M Chibnick
 St Sgt Pete Chopelas
 2d Lt Richmond S Clark
 Pfc Richard G Clarkson
 Pvt Warren K Clemmons
 Pfc Thomas J Clifton
 Pfc Bartholomew Connolly
 Pvt Ricardo Contreras
 Pvt Russell D Converse
 Pfc Charles W Cook
 Pfc Joseph V Cormier
 1st Lt Wade H Corn Jr

Pfc Paul E Crabtree
Pfc Patrick J Creegan
Pvt Robert F Crist
Pvt Steven F Crnkovich
Pfc Charles H Cummings
Pvt Lawrence L Curtwright
Pfc Sammie Cutaia
Pfc Jack C Davis
Pfc Lonnie T Davis Jr
Pfc Charles A Dececca
St Sgt Earl E DeLong
Pvt Harry A Delva
Pvt Robert E Demuth
Pfc Joseph P Dennick
Tech Sgt Mario E DeVitto
2d Lt Joe F Dewberry
Pfc John W Dewey
Pvt Raymond A DiGerolamo
Pvt Juan P Dimas
Pvt James L Dinkel
Sgt Theodore F Dokes
Pfc Albany A Doucette
Pfc Clarence Douget
2d Lt Booth M Duggan
Pfc Carlton O Duley
Pfc Eugene C Dunbar
Sgt Kenneth J Dunn
Pfc Robert A Dunneback
Pvt Robert A Dunseth
Pfc James A Duthie
Tech Sgt William F Dwyer
Pvt Allen B Eadline
Pfc Philip B Earle
Pfc Ernest E East
Pfc James W Edgar
Sgt James F Edwards Jr
St Sgt Robert L Egler
Pfc Eugene H Elliott
Pfc William E Emerick
Pvt Adrien G Essiembre
2d Lt Paul T Estell
Pfc John J Falardeau
Tec 4 Harold H Fales

Cpl James L Farley
St Sgt Richard K Fearon
Pfc Wilfred F Fedler
Pvt William R Ferguson
St Sgt Benny Ferro
Pvt Eldred W Fick
Sgt Willis L Fields Jr
Pvt Frank A Fierros
Pfc Thadeus T Filipowicz
Pfc Lloyd W Finch
Pfc Ralph C Fisk
Pfc Walter M E Foley
Pfc Frank Forrest
Pvt Harold K Fountain
Pfc Richard E Fox
Pfc Lloyd E Frandsen
Pfc Steven T Frazier
Pfc Earl M Fussell
Pvt Stanford I Gabo
Pvt Thurman S L Gaddis
Sgt Miguel T Gallegos
Pvt Ramon Garcia Jr
St Sgt David W Gary Jr
Pfc David Gauna
Sgt Chester R George
Pfc Carl T Giangrosso
Pfc H H Gillespie Jr
Pfc William H Given
St Sgt Charles J Gliha
Pvt Harry V Glover Jr
Pvt Felix M Gomez
Pfc Joe Gomez
Pvt Conrado A Granillo
St Sgt Joseph E Grant
Pvt Hans W Gras
Pfc Jack F Gredner
St Sgt Wilbur J Green
Pfc Clifford L Greenwood
St Sgt Ernest R Grice
Pfc William C Hackel
Pfc Claude L Hall
Pfc Robert J Hall
Pfc William F Hansard

Pfc Y V Harbour
 St Sgt Herman J Harlan
 2d Lt Earl J Harris
 St Sgt Lawrence W Haselhuhn
 Sgt Lewis P Hassel Jr
 Pfc Ross H Hatcher
 Pvt George H Hayes
 Pvt Ralph D Herndon
 1st Lt M G Herpolsheimer
 Pfc Willie Herring
 Pvt Jerome P Higgins
 Sgt Killus Hines
 Pfc Frank L Hinson
 Pfc Louis J Hirshbeck
 Sgt Edward F Hoffman
 2d Lt John D Hogan
 St Sgt Warren Hohlfelder
 Pfc Ralph W Holso
 2d Lt Herbert J Hopfenberg
 Pfc Alfred R Horton
 Pfc Noah J Hostetler
 Cpl Roy L Hott
 Pfc Robert E Howell
 St Sgt Fred L Hubbard
 Pvt Kenneth O Hudson
 Pvt Theodore Hull
 Pvt Louis H Hummel
 Pfc Charles C Hundley
 Pfc John E Hurley
 2d Lt Leonard C Hurley
 Pfc Albert P Hurst
 1st Lt Travis W Isaacs
 Pfc Anthony N Izzo
 Pfc Jerome P Jackman
 Pfc John J Jackson
 Sgt Edmund W Jagodzinski
 Pvt Edward Joe
 Cpl George E Johns
 Pfc Roy V Johns
 Sgt Edward M Johnson
 Pfc Eugene Johnson
 Sgt Glen S Johnson
 Tech Sgt Herbert L Johnson

Pvt John F Johnson
 Pvt Elvin A Juri Jr
 Sgt Joseph J Kalafut
 Pfc Reino E Kallio
 Pfc Anthony Kaminski
 Pvt Morris S Kaplan
 2d Lt Wallace J Kappel
 1st Lt Solomon Katz
 2d Lt Frank J Kelly
 Pfc Henry L Kemp
 Pvt David L Kienast
 1st Lt Harold D Kimmel
 Pfc Earl A King
 Pfc Noel C King
 Pvt Richard E King
 2d Lt George B Kirk
 Pfc Barnet Klass
 St Sgt Frank P Kolenchak
 Pfc Stanley M Kondziolka
 Pfc William H Koonntz
 Sgt LeRoy R Kowalsky
 Pfc Theodore M Kriguer
 Sgt C S Krolikowski
 St Sgt William Krotkosky
 St Sgt Charles F Kuch III
 Pvt Leonard F LaCross
 Pfc Robert F Lackey
 Sgt Paul R Landis
 Sgt Walter J Landry
 Pvt Victor Langolf
 Pvt Thomas F Lanigan
 Pfc Ralph C Lansford
 Pfc Jerry P Lardieri
 2d Lt Arthur J Lazazzero
 Pfc Arthur Leguno Jr
 Sgt Charles W Lemmon
 Pvt Andrew F Lepine
 Pvt Edward L Lestage
 2d Lt Seymour Levine
 Pvt Kenneth F Linville
 Cpl James B Little
 Pvt John E Lockyer
 Pfc Floyd Lollis

Pfc Delfin B Lopez
Pfc Lawrence M Lorber
Pvt Joseph H Lothenbach
Pfc Eugene J Lowe
Pfc Arthur J Lozeau
Pfc Stanislaus J Luboch
Pfc Lionel J Lussier
Pfc Andrew W Lynch
Pfc James G Mackey
Pvt Ivan G Madison
Sgt Joseph P Maguire
2d Lt Anson A Maher III
St Sgt Donald H Mann
Pfc Joe A Mansanarez
Pfc Gennaro Manzo
Cpl Joseph A Marsden
Pfc Joseph G Martin
Pvt Vest C Martin
Pvt Edward J Matherne
Pfc Cletus S McBride
Pvt Daniel E McCahill
Tech Sgt John R McCandless
St Sgt Edward P McCarthy
Pfc Glen L McCartney
1st Lt Laverne E McDaniel
Pfc James W McDonald
Pvt Marion W McKeever
Pfc Charles W McKenrick
Pvt James H McKinney
Pvt James W McKinney
Pfc Wallace J McLeod
Sgt Paul T McMerrell
Pfc John E McNulty Jr
Pfc Harry G McSparin
Pvt Spurgeon L Meeks
Pvt C J S Menzenski
Pfc Joseph P Mercurio
Pfc Leonard F Meuse
St Sgt Melvin A Michalski
Pvt Stanley J Mickiewicz
Pfc Jay W Middleton
Pvt John S Mies
Pvt David A Mietzner

Sgt Kenneth C Miller
Pfc Louis H Miller
Tec 5 James W Moniz
Pvt Fermin A Montoya
Pfc Juan A Montoya
Tec 5 Alfred J Moore
Pfc John A Mora
Pfc Raul S Mora
Pfc Jack Morris
Pvt Louis L Morthberg
Pfc Ernest A Morton
2d Lt Angelo T Moscariello
Pfc William H Moyer
Pfc Lawrence J Murphy
Pfc Johnnie L Nance
Pfc Aldo H P Natali
Pfc Edward M Newcomb
Pfc Cecil R Nichols
Pfc Howard C Nielsen
Pfc Vicente C Nieto
Pvt Sidney S Noretsky
Pvt Delvin L Noward
Pvt William Nusbaum
Pfc John A Nutile
Cpl Homer O'Daniel
Pvt Edward J O'Leary
Pvt Thomas E O'Leary
Pvt Donald L Oliver
Pvt Eurie E Oliver
Sgt Emmett L Olson
Pvt Edward J Olszewski
Pfc Willis C O'Neal
Pfc Albert J Otlo
Pfc Vincent G Palermo
Pfc William F Palmer
2d Lt Jack J Parks
Pvt Otis G Parks
Pfc Charles E Parry
Pfc Frank O Patterson
Pfc Otis F Paulsrud
Pfc David R Peeler
Pvt Marvin L Petersen
Tec 5 Donald K Pettingill

1st Lt Gordon D Phipps
 Pvt John M Piekarski
 Pfc Fernando Pierson
 Pfc George W Pierson
 Pfc Edward Pikula
 1st Lt Frank M Pinney
 Pfc Samuel T Player Jr
 Sgt Henry C Pody
 Pfc Richard G Pohlmann
 Pfc E L Poindexter Jr
 Pfc Homero L Ponce
 Pvt Maurice J Poulin
 Pfc George A Preece
 Tech Sgt John J Preziosa
 Pfc William W Puchalski
 Pfc Donald T Puckett
 Pfc George H Quigley
 Pfc Stephen T Raic
 St Sgt Vernon R Raines
 Sgt Frank J Rajewski
 2d Lt Robert E Ramhorst
 Pfc Lawrence E Redmond
 Pvt Gilbert O Reed
 Pfc Hubert C Remacky
 Pfc Charles D Revell
 Pfc Edward J Rezny
 Pfc M Rides-at-the-Door
 2d Lt Sterling R Riggs III
 Pvt Clinton P Ring
 Sgt Richard A Robinson
 St Sgt Arcadio Robles
 Pvt Alfredo G Rodriguez
 Pvt Teodoro M Rodriguez
 Pvt Randolph C Rogers
 Pvt Louis R Rom
 Pvt Gordon L Rose
 Pfc Anton J Rosko
 Pvt Donald C Ross
 Sgt Kenneth M Ross
 1st Lt Lawrence E Rottler
 Pvt Morris D Rupe
 Pfc Allan Russell
 Pfc Joseph G Russell

Pfc Leonard W Rutter
 Pfc Andrew Ryfun
 Sgt Donald D Ryman
 Pfc Joseph M Saliba
 Pvt Pablo Sandoval
 Pfc John Sandretto
 Pvt Joe A Santistevan
 Pvt Jose A Santoy
 Tech Sgt Philip R Savelo
 Pfc Raymond K Schaaf
 Pvt Arthur L R Schlegel
 Pvt Theodore R Schmidt
 Pfc Graven E Schwaderer
 Pvt Nicholas F Scobel
 Pfc Alfred M Scott Jr
 Pvt David L Secrist
 Pfc Lawrence Seroczynski
 Pfc Charles L Shannon
 Cpl Howard F Shea
 Pvt Edward Shean
 St Sgt Fred S Shemas
 Pfc John C Sheppard
 Pfc Jay S Showalter
 Pvt Alfred F Shroyer
 Pvt Everett H Sieger
 Pvt Anthony J Silc
 Cpl Robert E Slaght
 Sgt Henry D Sloan
 Pfc Adolphus G Smith
 Pvt James J Smith
 Pfc Joseph M Smith Jr
 St Sgt Thomas A Smith
 Pfc Leonard L Solomon
 Pfc Russell M Speller
 Tec 5 Nicholas Stamoulis
 Pfc Donald R Sperry
 2d Lt John P Stabile
 Pfc Ben C Steele
 Pvt Francis C Steele
 Pvt Eugene B Steffen
 Pfc Robert B Stewart
 Pvt Arthur W Strong Jr
 Pvt James A Suggs

Pvt Anton B Szymarek
 Pvt Richard E Tague
 Pvt Frank A Talokowski
 Pvt Bernard B Tangenberg
 St Sgt Hervey A Tanguay
 Pvt Victor P Tarmasewicz
 Pfc Avedes V Tarpinian
 Pvt Zenas R Taylor
 2d Lt Alan Thomas
 Pfc James R Thomas
 Sgt Forrest E Thomason
 St Robert E Tomb
 2d Lt Nathaniel Toole
 Pvt Ivan A Toro
 Pvt Charles Trabaiko
 Pfc Leno P Trevisan
 Pvt Thomas M Trussell
 Pvt Oscar A Turgeon
 Pvt William L Tusing Jr
 Pfc John R Tyree
 Pvt Joseph D Udovick
 Pvt Pedro Valenzuela
 Pvt Claude P Vallet Jr
 Pvt Max M Vargas
 Pfc Richard E Veine
 Sgt Charles H Vickers
 Pvt Charles Vinson
 Pfc Paul E Voelkel
 Pvt Albert G Walaitis
 Pvt Daniel E Walker
 Pfc Derrell W Walton
 Pfc George W Ward
 Pvt Norbert F Ward
 Pvt Dow L Warren
 Pvt John D Waters
 Pfc William T Watson
 Pvt Lewis W Weber
 Pfc John L Webster
 2d Lt Claus S Wells
 Pfc Arnold M West
 Tech Sgt Bernard W Whewell
 Pfc Lonnie Whitaker
 Cpl Fred C White

Pfc Tee W Whitehead
 St Sgt Arthur A Wickstrom
 Tec 4 Donald H Williams
 Pvt Lyold C Williams
 Pfc Dallas W Wilson
 Pfc Erie M Wimmer
 Pfc Bennie H Wint
 Sgt Robert C Witcosky
 1st Lt Harry Woliansky
 Pvt Leon G Wood
 1st Lt Raymond S Wood
 Pvt Wayne G Woolley
 Pvt Klair L Wright
 Pvt Robert Wullschleger
 St Sgt Leo Yaroshyk
 Pvt Fred T Zates
 Cpl Henry A Zumpol

**Headquarters & Headquarters
 Battery, Division Artillery**

2d Lt Charles W Cross

221st Field Artillery Battalion

Pvt James Carfora
 Pvt Roscoe L Frakes
 Tec 4 Kenneth E Gross
 Pvt Robert F Hartlein
 Pvt Joseph M Siggillino
 Pfc Lloyd Spurlock

245th Field Artillery Battalion

Pvt Robert E Laffee
 Pvt T L Lucas
 Pfc Joseph T Mullane
 Pfc George Popel

246th Field Artillery Battalion

Pvt William C Cremo
 2d Lt Earl E Excell

Tec 4 Clarence Fulcher
 Tec 5 Barney C O'Neil
 Pfc Hardy Robison
 Tec 5 Ernest G Ruud
 Pfc John J Zamlen

247th Field Artillery Battalion

Pvt Frank E Bartucz
 2d Lt Edward G Davis
 Pfc Joseph F Telesz
 Pvt Martin V Verkamp

THE TOTAL COST				
Campaign	Killed in Action ¹	Wounded in Action ²	Missing in Action	Total
Guadalcanal	533	902	4	1,439
Bougainville	301	898	13	1,212
Leyte, Samar, Straits	165	550	0	715
Cebu, Bohol, Negros	449	1,969	9	2,427
TOTALS	<u>1,448³</u>	<u>4,319</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>5,793</u>
<p>¹ Includes at least 231 who died of wounds received in action.</p> <p>² Includes an undetermined number who were injured in action.</p> <p>³ The Honor Roll totals include 1,317 names out of the 1,448 known to have been killed and the 26 listed as missing in action. The difference between the two totals can, according to the Adjutant General's Office, be traced to clerical errors, lost records, and incomplete reports.</p>				

Distinguished Unit Citation

COMPANY E, 182D INFANTRY, UNITED STATES ARMY, IS CITED for gallantry in action against the enemy at Bougainville, Solomon Islands, 10 and 11 March 1944. On the morning of 10 March 1944, the Japanese attacked and quickly overran our occupying force on Hill 260. When reinforcements were brought up in a plan to seize the summit of the hill, *Company E*, after a preliminary reconnaissance, counterattacked from the southwest, over terrain covered with dense jungle growth and often inclining to an angle of 45 degrees, with the objective of retaking the south portion of the hill. As the operations began, the enemy were prepared for a counterattack prior to the arrival of *Company E* at the base of the hill. Enemy resistance increased with the progress of the attack, and in the face of intense fire from light machine guns, Nambu guns, knee mortars, and hand grenades, *Company E's* forward movement came to a standstill after an advance of 40 yards. A double enveloping movement attempted by the 1st and 2d Platoons was forced into a withdrawal after suffering heavy casualties. Further casualties resulted in the 3d Platoon from flanking enemy machine-gun fire during a drive north on the hill. In a renewed charge the 2d Platoon was virtually decimated, but in all sectors *Company E* held every inch gained. The enemy, reinforced with automatic weapons and riflemen during the night, charged the morning of 11 March 1944. *Company E* repulsed the assault, killing 20 enemy, but in so doing so its own effective combat strength was reduced to only 35 men. Later, in company force, the enemy launched another counterattack under a torrent of knee mortar shells, hand grenades, machine guns, and rifle fire. With one-fourth of its original strength, *Company E* fought gallantly, and firmly held off the enemy, inflicting heavy casualties. By this time enemy shell fire had cleared out all vegetation, and *Company E's* weapons and movements were open to the observation of the enemy who was delivering accurate plunging fire on them. *Company E*, with only 24 fighting men left, finally withdrew under the leadership of a wounded commander. [*General Orders No. 56, War Department, 12 July 1944.*]

Presidential Unit Citation

THE FOLLOWING AWARDS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (Navy) are confirmed in accordance with paragraph 2, AR 260-15.

The Presidential Unit Emblem with star may be worn permanently by those individuals who were assigned, or attached, to and present for duty with a unit in the action for which the Presidential Unit Citation was awarded. The Presidential Unit Emblem without star may be worn temporarily by those individuals subsequently assigned, or permanently attached, to such unit, but who were not present for duty in the action for which the unit was cited, only so long as they remain with such unit.

The Presidential Unit Citation (Navy) dated 4 February 1943, was awarded, in the name of the President of the United States, by the Secretary of the Navy. The citation reads as follows:

"The officers and enlisted men of the First Marine Division, Reinforced, on August 7 to 9, 1942, demonstrated outstanding gallantry and determination in successfully executing forced landing assaults against a number of strongly defended Japanese positions on Tulagi, Gavutu, Tanambogo, Florida and Guadalcanal, British Solomon Islands, completely routing all the enemy forces and seizing a most valuable base and airfield within the enemy zone of operations in the South Pacific Ocean. From the above period until 9 December, 1942, this Reinforced Division not only held their important strategic positions despite determined and repeated Japanese naval, air and land attacks, but by a series of offensive operations against strong enemy resistance drove the Japanese from the proximity of the airfield and inflicted great losses on them by land and air attacks. The courage and determination displayed in these operations were of an inspiring order."

UNITS

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Americal Division
Headquarters, Division Artillery, Americal Division

Band II, Americal Division

Detachment, 26th Signal Company

57th Engineer Combat Battalion

121st Medical Battalion

125th Quartermaster Company (redesignated from parts of 101st Quartermaster Regiment, 30 April 1943)

Detachment, 132d Infantry Regiment

164th Infantry Regiment

182d Infantry Regiment (less Band and 3d Battalion)

Headquarters Battery, Service Battery, Medical Detachment, Batteries A, B and C, 245th Field Artillery Battalion

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Service Battery, Medical Detachment, Batteries A, B and C, Provisional Battery K, and Medical Detachment, Provisional Battery K, 246th Field Artillery Battalion

721st Ordnance Light Maintenance Company (activated 1 May 43 with personnel from 3465th Ordnance Medium Automotive Maintenance Company).

[*General Orders No. 73, Department of the Army, 2 November 1948.*]

Order of Battle

[This order of battle, based on machine records unit rosters and on unit records and historial reports, is not to be considered completely accurate. It represents only the best available information concerning the units listed.]

Division Commander

27 May 42 to 31 Dec 42
MajGen Alexander M Patch jr
1 Jan 43 to 28 May 43
BrigGen Edmund B Sebree
29 May 43 to 31 Mar 44
MajGen John R Hodge
1 Apr 44 to 3 Nov 44
MajGen Robert B McClure
4 Nov 44 to 12 Dec 45
MajGen William H Arnold

Acting Division Commander

4 Mar 43 to 8 Mar 43
BrigGen William R Woodward
26 Jul 43 to 2 Aug 43
BrigGen William R Woodward
3 Aug 43 to 15 Aug 43
BrigGen Edmund B Sebree
22 Aug 43 to 3 Oct 43
BrigGen William R Woodward
24 Oct 43 to 2 Nov 43
BrigGen William R Woodward
30 Nov 43 to 7 Dec 43
BrigGen William A McCulloch
4 Jun 44 to 17 Jun 44
BrigGen LeCount H Slocum

28 Aug 44 to 1 Sep 44
BrigGen LeCount H Slocum
8 Jun 45 to 13 Jun 45
BrigGen LeCount H Slocum
14 Jun 45 to 25 Jun 45
BrigGen Eugene W Ridings
26 Jun 45 to 5 Aug 45
BrigGen LeCount H Slocum

Assistant Division Commander

27 May 42 to 25 Aug 42
None designated
26 Aug 42 to 31 Dec 42
BrigGen Edmund B Sebree
1 Jan 43 to 20 Jan 43
Col Bryant E Moore
21 Jan 43 to 28 May 43
None designated
29 May 43 to 11 Jul 43
BrigGen Edmund B Sebree
12 Jul 43 to 12 Jul 44
BrigGen William A McCulloch
13 Jul 44 to 12 Dec 45
BrigGen Eugene W Ridings

Chief of Staff

27 May 42 to 25 Aug 42
Col Edmund B Sebree

26 Aug 42 to 8 Dec 42
Col William R Woodward
9 Dec 42 to 31 Dec 42
BrigGen Edmund B Sebree¹
1 Jan 43 to 15 Jun 43
Col Crump Garvin
16 Jun 43 to 5 Jul 43
LtCol Paul A Gavan (acting)
6 Jul 43 to 21 Feb 44
Col Claude M McQuarrie
22 Feb 44 to 19 Jun 44
Col Paul A Gavan
20 Jun 44 to 20 Jul 44
LtCol Mervyn M Magee (acting)
21 Jul 44 to 31 Jul 44
LtCol Meredith Lee (acting)
1 Aug 44 to 25 Dec 44
Col Paul A Gavan
26 Dec 44 to 3 Nov 45
Col Mervyn M Magee
4 Nov 45 to 30 Nov 45
Col Edgar J Treacy jr (acting)²
1 Dec 45 to 12 Dec 45
Col Mervyn M Magee

Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1

27 May 42 to 4 Aug 42
Col Raymond E S Williamson
5 Aug 42 to 19 Sep 42
LtCol John A McComsey
20 Sep 42 to 24 Jan 43
LtCol Kenneth McKillop
25 Jan 43 to 30 Sep 43
LtCol Samuel E Gee
1 Oct 43 to 21 Mar 44
LtCol John D Townsend
22 Mar 44 to 30 Jun 44
Major John Watt

1 Jul 44 to 21 Sep 45
LtCol Lincoln W Stoddard
22 Sep 45 to 12 Dec 45
LtCol James Taylor jr

Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2

27 May 42 to 18 May 43
LtCol William D Long
19 May 43 to 15 Jun 43
LtCol Jacob S Sauer
16 Jun 43 to 25 Dec 44
LtCol Richard H Agnew
26 Dec 44 to 20 Jul 45
LtCol Carl D McFerren
21 Jul 45 to 9 Aug 45
Capt Douglas D Moore (acting)
10 Aug 45 to 7 Oct 45
Major Raymond G Chesley
(acting)
8 Oct 45 to 15 Oct 45
Major Sutter E Kunkel
16 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major Raymond G Chesley

Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3

27 May 42 to 13 Sep 42
LtCol Bryant E Moore
14 Sep 42 to 15 Jun 43
LtCol Paul A Gavan
16 Jun 43 to 20 Mar 44
LtCol Jacob S Sauer
21 Mar 44 to 19 Jun 44
LtCol Mervyn M Magee
20 Jun 44 to 20 Jul 44
Major George H Nee jr (acting)
21 Jul 44 to 26 Dec 44
LtCol Mervyn M Magee

¹ Acted as Chief of Staff during the period indicated while serving concurrently as Assistant Division Commander.

² Acted as Chief of Staff during the absence of Col Mervyn M Magee prior to and during movement of Division to U. S.

27 Dec 44 to 30 Apr 45
Col Samuel E Gee
1 May 45 to 28 May 45
LtCol George H Nee jr
29 May 45 to 9 Oct 45
LtCol Lothar B Sibert
10 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
LtCol James R Ruhlin

Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4

27 May 42 to 16 Feb 43
LtCol John W Homewood
17 Feb 43 to 20 Mar 44
LtCol Mervyn M Magee
21 Mar 44 to 30 Jun 44
Major Robert K Wimmer
1 Jul 44 to 31 Jul 44
Major Joseph P Driscoll
1 Aug 44 to 21 Sep 45
LtCol George E Graf
22 Sep 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major Adolph J Gondek

Adjutant General

27 May 42 to 15 Apr 43
LtCol Kenneth G Hoge
16 Apr 43 to 27 Apr 44
LtCol William H Biggerstaff
28 Apr 44 to 16 May 45
LtCol Cyril L Wolfhope
17 May 45 to 9 Jun 45
Major William A Moreland
(acting)
10 Jun 45 to 12 Dec 45
LtCol William A Moreland

Chaplain

27 May 42 to 30 Sep 45
LtCol James E Dunford
1 Oct 45 to 6 Oct 45
Major Rex S Kendall

7 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
Capt James H Woods

Chemical Officer

27 May 42 to 31 Aug 43
LtCol Orbie Bostwick
1 Sep 43 to 11 Oct 43
Lt Lloyd D Shand (acting)
12 Oct 43 to 29 Feb 44
Major Woodson C Tucker jr
1 Mar 44 to 12 Dec 45
Major Lloyd D Shand

Engineer

27 May 42 to 20 Apr 44
LtCol George H Lenox
21 Apr 44 to 24 Oct 44
Major John E Rowan
25 Oct 44 to 20 Sep 45
LtCol Joseph P Driscoll
21 Sep 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major George H Lovejoy

Finance Officer

27 May 42 to 15 Mar 43
LtCol George W Studebaker
16 Mar 43 to 23 Apr 45
LtCol Edmund F Bunyon
24 Apr 45 to 8 Aug 45
Lt Edward P Gilronan jr
(acting)
9 Aug 45 to 29 Oct 45
Major Edgar R Brooks
30 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
Capt Edward P Gilronan jr

Inspector General

27 May 42 to 18 Jul 43
LtCol Kenneth McKillop

19 Jul 43 to 27 Nov 44
LtCol Frank Lucas
28 Nov 44 to 31 Mar 45
Capt Alfred E Adams jr
1 Apr 45 to 30 Apr 45
Lt Robert E Kent (acting)
1 May 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major Alfred E Adams jr

Ordnance Officer

27 May 42 to 15 Nov 43
LtCol Orrin B Jacobson
16 Nov 43 to 30 Oct 45
LtCol Meredith Lee
31 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
Capt Kenneth J Mooney

Provost Marshal

27 May 42 to 8 Dec 42
LtCol Hardin C Sweeney³
9 Dec 42 to 10 Mar 43
Capt John Dailey³
11 Mar 43 to 30 Sep 43
Major John D Townsend
1 Oct 43 to 14 Oct 44
Capt James I Sikes
15 Oct 44 to 1 Nov 44
Lt Edward J Flynn
2 Nov 44 to 15 Dec 44
Capt Archie H Witt
16 Dec 44 to 20 Aug 45
Major James I Sikes
21 Aug 45 to 21 Sep 45
LtCol William J Smith
22 Sep 45 to 12 Dec 45
Capt Peter J Corte

Quartermaster

27 May 42 to 31 Dec 42
Col Joseph H Burgheim
1 Jan 43 to 30 Sep 45
LtCol Ralph T Noonan
1 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major Edward E West

Signal Officer

27 May 42 to 1 Aug 43
Capt Harry T Miller⁴
2 Aug 43 to 23 Sep 43
LtCol Robert B H Rockwell
24 Sep 43 to 6 Oct 45
LtCol Leslie S Wells
7 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
Lt John J Doran

Special Service (A&R) Officer

27 May 42 to 31 Jun 43
Major Milton Cook
1 Jun 43 to 8 Aug 43
Major Willard O Foster
9 Aug 43 to 30 Jun 44
Major Lincoln W Stoddard
1 Jul 44 to 10 Aug 45
Major Arthur B Balinger
11 Aug 45 to 12 Dec 45
Lt John J McNeill jr

Surgeon

27 May 42 to 4 Dec 42
LtCol Frank W Pinger⁵
5 Dec 42 to 28 Feb 43
Col Dale G Friend⁵
1 Mar 43 to 4 Apr 43
Major James F Collins⁵

³ Identities and dates of tours not certain.

⁴ Date of tour not certain.

⁵ Information not fully substantiated in available records.

- 5 Apr 43 to 6 Jun 43
LtCol Martin A Berezin
- 7 Jun 43 to 14 Jun 44
LtCol James F Collins
- 15 Jun 44 to 6 Oct 45
LtCol Harold N Cavanaugh
- 7 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major Robert E Fisher

**Headquarters Company, Americal
Division**

- 1 May 43 to 1 Jul 43
Major Henry B Shea
- 2 Jul 43 to 7 Oct 43
Major Stuart W Tompkins
- 8 Oct 43 to 12 Jan 44
Capt John T Bowes
- 13 Jan 44 to 26 Jul 45
Capt Charles R Hannan
- 27 Jul 45 to 7 Oct 45
Capt Lee H Mowry
- 8 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
Capt Wayne J Buckhanon

Special Troops

- 1 Oct 43 to 23 Jan 44
LtCol Samuel E Gee
- 24 Jan 44 to 20 Aug 45
LtCol William J Smith
- 21 Aug 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major John H Seymour

21st Reconnaissance Troop

- 1 May 43 to 10 Aug 43
Capt Peter A Petito
- 11 Aug 43 to 11 Sep 43
Major Willard O Foster
- 12 Sep 43 to 15 May 44
Capt Johnson B Allen
- 16 May 44 to 23 Apr 45
Capt Howard N Steff

- 24 Apr 45 to 9 Aug 45
Lt Donald E Atkinson
- 10 Aug 45 to 12 Dec 45
Lt Carl L Riddle

26th Signal Company

- 27 May 42 to 15 Apr 44
Capt Harry T Miller
- 16 Apr 44 to 10 Feb 45
Capt Earl P Cook jr
- 11 Feb 45 to 24 Sep 45
Capt Everett Griek
- 25 Sep 45 to 12 Dec 45
Lt James E Parnell

57th Engineer Combat Battalion

- 27 May 42 to 20 Apr 44
LtCol George H Lenox
- 21 Apr 44 to 24 Oct 44
Major John E Rowan
- 25 Oct 44 to 20 Sep 45
LtCol Joseph P Driscoll
- 21 Sep 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major George H Lovejoy

121st Medical Battalion

- 1 May 43 to 14 Jun 44
LtCol James F Collins
- 15 Jun 44 to 21 Sep 45
LtCol John V Belmonte
- 22 Sep 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major Walter C Twineham

125th Quartermaster Company

- 1 May 43 to 15 Aug 43
Capt Courtland B Bacall
- 16 Aug 43 to 29 Feb 44
Capt William G Ulbricht
- 1 Mar 44 to 20 May 45
Capt David M Hayes

- 21 May 45 to 21 Sep 45
Capt William G Ulbricht
- 22 Sep 45 to 1 Nov 45
Major Edward E West
- 2 Nov 45 to 12 Dec 45
Lt Felix A O'Connor

721st Ordnance Light Maintenance Company

- 1 May 43 to 12 May 43
Capt James R Bright
- 13 May 43 to 31 Mar 44
Capt Benjamin Rabin
- 1 Apr 44 to 30 Oct 44
Capt Walter H Schweder
- 1 Nov 44 to 30 Jun 45
Capt Floyd F Powers
- 1 Jul 45 to 20 Sep 45
Lt Robert O Bauch
- 21 Sep 45 to 12 Dec 45
Lt Adolph Jacobyansky jr

132d Infantry Regiment

- 27 May 42 to 28 Dec 42
Col LeRoy E Nelson
- 29 Dec 42 to 7 Feb 43
Col Alexander M George
- 8 Feb 43 to 1 May 43
LtCol Andrew F Casper
- 2 May 43 to 21 Feb 44
Col Joseph K Bush
- 22 Feb 44 to 3 Jun 45
Col Claude M McQuarrie
- 4 Jun 45 to 5 Aug 45
LtCol Louis L Franco
- 6 Aug 45 to 12 Dec 45
Col Claude M McQuarrie

1st Battalion, 132d Infantry

- 27 May 42 to 15 Apr 43
LtCol Earl F Ripstra

- 16 Apr 43 to 20 Aug 43
Major Luther Adams
- 21 Aug 43 to 31 Oct 43
LtCol James L Grier
- 1 Nov 43 to 31 Jan 44
LtCol Harry A Berger
- 1 Feb 44 to 15 Oct 45
LtCol Raymond E Daehler
- 16 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
LtCol Floyd H Norris

2d Battalion, 132d Infantry

- 27 May 42 to 31 Mar 43
LtCol George F Ferry
- 1 Apr 43 to 15 May 44
LtCol H Wirt Butler
- 16 May 44 to 10 May 45
LtCol Joseph F Ryneska
- 11 May 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major Frederick L Lochbihler

3d Battalion, 132d Infantry

- 27 May 42 to 15 Sep 42
LtCol Roscoe W Barbour
- 16 Sep 42 to 19 Dec 42
LtCol William C Wright
- 20 Dec 42 to 15 Jan 44
LtCol Louis L Franco
- 16 Jan 44 to 20 Feb 44
LtCol Howard N Smalley
- 21 Feb 44 to 30 Apr 45
LtCol Louis L Franco
- 1 May 45 to 12 Dec 45
LtCol Franklin R Brickles

164th Infantry Regiment

- 27 May 42 to 13 Sep 42
Col Earle R Sarles
- 14 Sep 42 to 31 Dec 42
Col Bryant E Moore

1 Jan 43 to 15 Jun 43
Col Paul G Daly

16 Jun 43 to 20 Apr 44
Col Crump Garvin

21 Apr 44 to 16 Jun 44
LtCol Samuel E Gee

17 Jun 44 to 20 Jun 44
LtCol Stafford N Ordahl (acting)

21 Jun 44 to 13 Jun 45
Col William J Mahoney

14 Jun 45 to 30 Jun 45
LtCol William H Considine
(acting)

1 Jul 45 to 12 Dec 45
Col William J Mahoney

1st Battalion, 164th Infantry

27 May 42 to 15 Mar 43
LtCol Frank Richards

16 Mar 43 to 10 Jun 44
LtCol William H Considine

11 Jun 44 to 10 Aug 44
Major Henry T Brown

11 Aug 44 to 20 Jul 45
LtCol Arthur K Amos

21 Jul 45 to 31 Aug 45
Major John A Gossett

1 Sep 45 to 12 Dec 45
LtCol Arthur K Amos

2d Battalion, 164th Infantry

27 May 42 to 14 Sep 42
LtCol Ronald J McDonald

15 Sep 42 to 10 Nov 42
LtCol Arthur C Timboe

11 Nov 42 to 15 Mar 43
LtCol Ben J Northridge

16 Mar 43 to 1 Jun 43
Major William C Meline

2 Jun 43 to 25 Oct 43
LtCol Floyd E Dunn

26 Oct 43 to 23 Jan 44
LtCol William J Smith

24 Jan 44 to 20 Apr 44
LtCol Samuel E Gee

21 Apr 44 to 15 Jun 44
Major William C Meline

16 Jun 44 to 12 Dec 45
LtCol Veon M McConnell

3d Battalion, 164th Infantry

27 May 42 to 15 Mar 43
LtCol Robert K Hall^e

16 Mar 43 to 7 May 44
LtCol Stafford N Ordahl

8 May 44 to 8 Jan 45
LtCol William Mjogdalen

9 Jan 45 to 4 Feb 45
Major Francis T Kane

5 Feb 45 to 21 Mar 45
LtCol Howard N Smalley

22 Mar 45 to 30 May 45
Major Francis T Kane

31 May 45 to 12 Dec 45
LtCol Howard N Smalley

182d Infantry Regiment

27 May 42 to 25 Oct 42
Col Howard E Fuller

26 Oct 42 to 18 May 43
Col Daniel W Hogan

19 May 43 to 21 Mar 44
Col William D Long

22 Mar 44 to 14 Jun 45
Col Floyd E Dunn

15 Jun 45 to 30 Jun 45
LtCol Francis W O'Brien

1 Jul 45 to 12 Dec 45
Col Floyd E Dunn

^e Regimental records indicate that Capt Herald L Crook commanded this battalion temporarily on Guadalcanal when LtCol Robert K Hall was wounded and evacuated. Dates of Capt Crook's tour are not available.

1st Battalion, 182d Infantry

- 27 May 42 to 30 Apr 43
LtCol Francis J McGowan
- 1 May 43 to 31 May 43
LtCol Otis M Whitney
- 1 Jun 43 to 30 Jun 43
Major Albert J Hannon
- 1 Jul 43 to 15 Nov 43
LtCol William J Mahoney
- 16 Nov 43 to 21 Jun 44
LtCol Everett B Mersereau
- 22 Jun 44 to 15 Jul 44
Major Arthur D'Amico
- 16 Jul 44 to 10 Apr 45
LtCol John Watt
- 11 Apr 45 to 27 Apr 45
LtCol Francis W O'Brien
- 28 Apr 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major John T Murphy

2d Battalion, 182d Infantry

- 27 May 42 to 30 Apr 43
LtCol Bernard B Twombly
- 1 May 43 to 10 Jun 43
Major Richard B Dolbeare
- 11 Jun 43 to 20 Mar 44
LtCol Dexter Lowry
- 21 Mar 44 to 15 Jun 44
LtCol Jacob S Sauer
- 16 Jun 44 to 31 Jul 44
Major Herman C Gramstorff
- 1 Aug 44 to 21 Oct 44
LtCol Arthur M Murray
- 22 Oct 44 to 28 Feb 45
LtCol Robert M Woolfolk
- 1 Mar 45 to 15 May 45
Major James W Harris
- 16 May 45 to 30 Jun 45
Major Adolph J Gondek

- 1 Jul 45 to 31 Oct 45
Major George F Gormlie
- 1 Nov 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major Eugene E Greenley

3d Battalion, 182d Infantry

- 27 May 42 to 31 May 42
LtCol Daniel W Hogan
- 1 Jun 42 to 31 Dec 42
Major Charles L Marshall
- 1 Jan 43 to 15 Feb 43
Major Theodore W Gramstorff
- 16 Feb 43 to 20 Mar 43
Major Charles L Marshall
- 21 Mar 43 to 1 Apr 43
Major Theodore W Gramstorff
- 2 Apr 43 to 30 Jul 43
LtCol Roy F Goggin
- 31 Jul 43 to 31 Aug 43
Major Theodore W Gramstorff
- 1 Sep 43 to 21 Jun 44
LtCol Albert J Hannon
- 22 Jun 44 to 30 Nov 44
Major James W Harris
- 1 Dec 44 to 15 Apr 45
LtCol John C Stapleton
- 16 Apr 45 to 20 May 45
Major William L Porte
- 21 May 45 to 19 Aug 45
Major David J O'Rourke
- 20 Aug 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major Sutter E Kunkel

Division Artillery Officer⁷

- 27 May 42 to 6 Jul 42
Col Clyde C Alexander
- 7 Jul 42 to 25 Aug 42
Col William R Woodward
- 26 Aug 42 to 25 Oct 42
Col Henry C DeMuth

⁷ This post was established in the absence of an organic Division Artillery headquarters prior to 26 Oct 42.

Division Artillery Commander

- 26 Oct 42 to 8 Dec 42
Col Henry C DeMuth
- 9 Dec 42 to 8 Dec 43
BrigGen William R Woodward
- 9 Dec 43 to 11 Apr 44
BrigGen William C Dunckel
- 12 Apr 44 to 7 May 44
LtCol Harvey E Landers (acting)
- 8 May 44 to 15 May 44
BrigGen William C Dunckel
- 16 May 44 to 26 May 44
Col Harvey E Landers
- 27 May 44 to 15 Oct 45
BrigGen LeCount H Slocum
- 16 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
Col John W Ferris

221st Field Artillery Battalion

- 15 Aug 42 to 28 Feb 44
LtCol Harvey E Landers
- 29 Feb 44 to 20 Mar 44
LtCol George H Nee jr
- 21 Mar 44 to 22 Sep 45
LtCol John F P Hill
- 23 Sep 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major Charles E Spooner

245th Field Artillery Battalion

- 15 Aug 42 to 30 Apr 43
Lt Col Elisha K Kane
- 1 May 43 to 17 Feb 44
LtCol DeWitt C Young
- 18 Feb 44 to 22 Jul 44
LtCol James Taylor jr
- 23 Jul 44 to 25 Sep 44
Major Howard L Crouse

- 26 Sep 44 to 19 Aug 45
LtCol James Taylor jr
- 20 Aug 45 to 25 Sep 45
Major Roscoe N Nicholson
- 26 Sep 45 to 28 Oct 45
Major O B Lawrence
- 29 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
LtCol Portus M Wheeler

246th Field Artillery Battalion

- 15 Aug 42 to 24 Mar 43
LtCol Alexander R Sewall
- 25 Mar 43 to 21 May 43
LtCol Humbert J Versace
- 22 May 43 to 30 Oct 43
Major Chester C Holloway jr
- 31 Oct 43 to 19 Mar 45
LtCol George E Adams
- 20 Mar 45 to 12 Dec 45
LtCol Chester C Holloway jr

247th Field Artillery Battalion

- 15 Aug 42 to 2 Mar 43
LtCol Robert E Moffet
- 3 Mar 43 to 22 Jul 44
LtCol George W Power
- 23 Jul 44 to 25 Sep 44
Major William Gray
- 26 Sep 44 to 28 May 45
LtCol George W Power
- 29 May 45 to 20 Sep 45
LtCol George H Nee jr
- 21 Sep 45 to 28 Oct 45
Major Ralph E Miner
- 29 Oct 45 to 12 Dec 45
Major Glenn S Hubbard

Troop Lists

Task Force 6814

New York Port of Embarkation, 23 Jan 42

- Hq & Hq Det, Task Force (including attached Division Surgeon's office)
- Hq & Hq Co, 51 Infantry Brigade
- 132 Infantry Regiment
- 182 Infantry Regiment
- 754 Tank Battalion
- 180 Field Artillery Regiment (155mm), less 2 Bn
 - 2 Bn, 123 Field Artillery Regiment (155mm)
- 70 Coast Artillery Regiment (AA, Mobile), less Band
 - 3 Bn, 244 Coast Artillery Regiment (155mm)
 - 3 Plat, Btry G, 244 Coast Artillery Regiment (155mm)
- 101 Quartermaster Regiment, less 2 Bn, section Car Plat, section Motorcycle Plat and Maintenance Plat
- Co A, 82 Quartermaster Battalion (LM)
 - 2 Plat, Co B, 89 Quartermaster Regiment
 - 2 and 3 Plats, Co A, 96 Quartermaster Bakery Battalion
 - 1 Bn, 108 Quartermaster Regiment
- 216 Quartermaster Company (Mobile Shoe and Textile Repair), less plat
- 705 Quartermaster Truck Company
 - 1 Bn, 101 Engineer Regiment
- 810 Aviation Engineer Battalion (Negro)
- 811 Aviation Engineer Battalion (Negro)
 - 22 Ordnance Medium Maintenance Company
 - 51 Ordnance Ammunition Company
 - 73 Ordnance Depot Company (two storehouse sections)
- 676 Ordnance Company (platoon)
 - 9 Station Hospital
 - 52 Evacuation Hospital
- 109 Station Hospital
- 101 Medical Regiment (less one collecting company, one ambulance company, and Division Surgeon's office)

67 Pursuit Squadron
58 Interceptor Control Squadron (section)
3 Quartermaster Aviation Supply Company (detachment)
Army Airways Communications System detachment
26 Signal Company
121 Signal Radar Intelligence Company
175 Signal Repair Company (radio and wire repair sections)
162 Signal Photo Company (unit)
65 Matériel Squadron (including attached medical personnel)
26 Military Police Company (platoon)
502 Army Postal Unit
Finance Detachment
2 Chemical Decontamination Company (detachment)
43 Engineer General Service Regiment, less Band¹
46 Engineer General Service Regiment, less Band¹
694 Signal Company (Hq & Hq Det)¹
Weather Detachment¹
13 Reconnaissance Squadron¹
4 General Hospital¹

Americal Division

New Caledonia, 27 May 42

Assigned

Hq & Hq Det, Task Force (including attached Division Surgeon's office)
Hq & Hq Co, 51 Infantry Brigade
132 Infantry Regiment
164 Infantry Regiment
182 Infantry Regiment
1 Plat, 39 Military Police Company
26 Signal Company
72 Field Artillery Regiment (105mm)
200 Field Artillery Regiment (155mm)
57 Engineer Combat Battalion
101 Medical Regiment (less two companies and Division Surgeon's office)
Finance Detachment

Attached

754 Light Tank Battalion
97 Field Artillery Pack Battalion
70 Coast Artillery Regiment (AA), less Band
3 Plat, Btry G, 244 Coast Artillery Regiment (155mm)
3 Bn, 244 Coast Artillery Regiment (155mm)

¹ Remained in Australia after debarkation at Melbourne.

Co A, 82 Quartermaster Battalion (LM)
 101 Quartermaster Regiment, less 2 Bn and additional units
 352 Quartermaster Composite Company, comprising two bakery plats, QM
 det (morticians), and QM Co (mobile shoe repair), less one plat
 1 Bn, 130 Quartermaster Regiment, less Cos A and B
 705 Quartermaster Truck Company
 810 Aviation Engineer Battalion (Negro)
 811 Aviation Engineer Battalion (Negro)
 22 Ordnance Medium Maintenance Company
 51 Ordnance Ammunition Company
 71 Ordnance Depot Company (composite)
 1 Plat, 676 Ordnance Aviation Company
 9 Station Hospital
 52 Evacuation Hospital
 109 Station Hospital
 67 Pursuit Squadron
 58 Interceptor Control Squadron (detachment)
 3 Quartermaster Aviation Supply Company (detachment)
 65 Matériel Squadron, less det
 700 Signal Air Warning Company
 Signal Detachment (Base Command Det)
 831 Signal Service Company
 2 Chemical Decontamination Company (detachment)
 502 Army Postal Unit
 Remount Detachment
 619 Quartermaster Aviation Light Maintenance Platoon
 620 Quartermaster Aviation Light Maintenance Platoon
 Army Airways Communications System detachment

Viti Levu, Fiji, 1 Oct 43

Hq & Hq Co, Americal Division
 Hq Special Troops, Americal Division
 Military Police Platoon, Americal Division
 21 Reconnaissance Troop (Mechanized)
 26 Signal Company
 57 Engineer Combat Battalion
 121 Medical Battalion
 125 Quartermaster Company
 132 Infantry Regiment, less Cannon Co²
 164 Infantry Regiment, less Cannon Co²
 182 Infantry Regiment, less Cannon Co²

² Cannon companies activated in U. S. and in training before shipment to South Pacific. Joined 3 March 1944 at Bougainville.

Hq & Hq Btry, Americal Division Artillery
 221 Field Artillery Battalion (155mm)
 245 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
 246 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
 247 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
 721 Ordnance Light Maintenance Company
 Band, Americal Division

ATTACHMENTS

New Caledonia

97 Field Artillery Pack Battalion
 70 Coast Artillery Regiment (AA)
 3 Plat, Btry G, 244 Coast Artillery Regiment (155mm)
 3 Bn, 244 Coast Artillery Regiment (155mm)
 810 Aviation Engineer Battalion (Negro)
 811 Aviation Engineer Battalion (Negro)
 700 Signal Air Warning Company
 831 Signal Service Company
 22 Ordnance Medium Maintenance Company
 51 Ordnance Ammunition Company
 71 Ordnance Depot Company (composite)
 1 Plat, 676 Ordnance Aviation Company
 1913 Quartermaster Truck Company (Aviation)
 Co A, 82 Quartermaster Battalion (LM)
 352 Quartermaster Company (composite)
 1 Bn, 130 Quartermaster Regiment, less Cos A and B
 3 Quartermaster Aviation Supply Company (detachment)
 65 Matériel Squadron
 Troop B, 251 Quartermaster Remount Squadron (detachment)
 1619 Quartermaster Aviation Company (MM)
 1620 Quartermaster Aviation Company (MM)
 9 Station Hospital
 52 Evacuation Hospital
 109 Station Hospital
 754 Light Tank Battalion
 67 Pursuit Squadron
 58 Interceptor Control Squadron (detachment)
 2 Chemical Decontamination Company (detachment)
 502 Army Postal Unit
 Army Airways Communications System detachment
 Hq & Hq Det, Air Corps

Guadalcanal

161 Infantry Regiment
147 Infantry Regiment less 2 Bn
 1 Bn, 10 Marine Regiment
 2 Bn, 10 Marine Regiment
 3 Bn, 10 Marine Regiment
Btrys L and Z, 11 Marine Regiment
 1 Bn, 11 Marine Regiment
 3 Bn, 11 Marine Regiment
Btry A, 14 Marine Defense Battalion
Btry A, 97 Field Artillery Pack Battalion
Btry F, 244 Coast Artillery Regiment
Btry B, 259 Coast Artillery Battalion

Bougainville

25 Infantry Regiment (Negro)
 1 Bn, 24 Infantry Regiment (Negro)
 3 Bn, Fiji Infantry Regiment
Co A, 145 Infantry Regiment
593 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm) (Negro)
93 Reconnaissance Troop (Mechanized) (Negro)
Cos A, C, D, 82 Chemical Mortar Battalion
Co A, 318 Engineer Combat Battalion (Negro)
Co A, 318 Medical Battalion (Negro)
Co D, 318 Medical Battalion (one plat) (Negro)
793 Ordnance Light Maintenance Company (detachment) (Negro)
106 Ordnance Bomb Disposal Squad
107 Ordnance Bomb Disposal Squad

Leyte and Samar

92 Division, Philippine Army
93 Division, Guerrilla Forces
 1 Filipino Infantry Regiment
542 Engineer Boat & Shore Regiment (detachment)
17 Portable Surgical Hospital

Cebu, Bohol and Negros Oriental

478 AAA AW Battalion, less Btrys C, D
746 AAA Gun Battalion
542 Engineer Boat & Shore Regiment, less det of Hq & Hq Co and
 Cos B, C, D

865 Aviation Engineer Battalion
 1459 Engineer Maintenance Company, less two plats
 636 Port Company
 480 Amphibian Truck Company, less one plat
 592 Joint Assault Signal Company, less Det 292
 2 Plat, 536 Signal Heavy Construction Company
 35 Message Center Team, Type 2 (DB), 997 Signal Service Battalion
 578 Ordnance Ammunition Company, less det
 106 Ordnance Medium Maintenance Company
 588 Ordnance Heavy Maintenance Company (Tank) (detachment)
 183 Ordnance Service Detachment (Bomb Disposal)
 Team No 5, 3073 Ordnance Company (Composite) (detachment)
 3521 Quartermaster Truck Company
 3368 Quartermaster Service Detachment (Driver Augmentation)
 1 Plat, 248 Quartermaster Depot Supply Company
 410 Quartermaster Refrigeration Detachment, Mobile
 4 Platoon, 123 Quartermaster Bakery Company
 254 Quartermaster Laundry Platoon, Hospital
 110 Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon, less one sec
 1 Plat, 3875 Quartermaster Gas Supply Company (section)
 58 Evacuation Hospital
 10 Portable Surgical Hospital
 17 Portable Surgical Hospital
 Co B (less det), 262 Medical Battalion
 399 Medical Collecting Company
 52 Malaria Control Unit
 401 Medical Composite Company (Malaria Survey)
 670 Medical Clearing Company (platoon)
 Co B, 716 Medium Tank Battalion
 Co B, 658 Amphibian Tractor Battalion
 Support Aircraft Party
 Co A, 80 Chemical Mortar Battalion
 184 Chemical Service Platoon (detachment)
 15 Philippine Civil Affairs Unit
 24 Philippine Civil Affairs Unit
 718 Army Postal Unit

Japan

180 Chemical Service Platoon
 Co C, 82 Chemical Mortar Battalion
 531 Military Police Battalion

DETACHMENTS

Guadalcanal

To 1 Marine Division:

Hq & Hq Co, 51 Infantry Brigade (forward echelon)
164 Infantry Regiment
182 Infantry Regiment, less 3 Bn
Hq, Americal Division Artillery
245 Field Artillery Battalion
246 Field Artillery Battalion
Prov Btry K, 246 Field Artillery Battalion
57 Engineer Combat Battalion, less dets
Prov Cos B and H, 101 Medical Regiment
Hq, 101 Quartermaster Regiment
Co A and 1 Plat Co B, 101 Quartermaster Regiment
Finance Detachment

To 2 Marine Division:

57 Engineer Combat Battalion
1 Bn, 182 Infantry Regiment

To Composite Army-Marine Division:

57 Engineer Combat Battalion
182 Infantry Regiment, less 3 Bn

To 25 Infantry Division:

164 Infantry Regiment
3 Bn, 182 Infantry Regiment
Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron

To 1 Bn, 8 Marine Regiment:

Co A, 57 Engineer Combat Battalion

To 147 Infantry Regiment:

Co B, 57 Engineer Combat Battalion

To 161 Infantry Regiment:

Co A, 57 Engineer Combat Battalion

To XIV Corps:

57 Engineer Combat Battalion
132 Infantry Regiment
164 Infantry Regiment
182 Infantry Regiment

Bougainville

To 37 Infantry Division:

2 Bn, 164 Infantry Regiment

To XIV Corps:

2 Bn, 164 Infantry Regiment

Leyte and Samar

To Eighth Army:

1 Bn, 132 Infantry Regiment

Americal Division Artillery (detachment)

26 Signal Company (detachment)

721 Ordnance Light Maintenance Company (detachment)

To Eighth Army Area Command:

164 Infantry Regiment

245 Field Artillery Battalion

Co C, 57 Engineer Combat Battalion

Co A, 121 Medical Battalion

Cebu, Bohol and Negros Oriental

To 108 Infantry RCT (Mindanao):

3 Bn, 164 Infantry Regiment

Btry A, 245 Field Artillery Battalion

To Eighth Army Area Command:

164 Infantry Regiment

ASSIGNMENT AND ATTACHMENT TO HIGHER HEADQUARTERS

New Caledonia

United States Army Forces in the South Pacific Area

Guadalcanal

United States Army Forces in the South Pacific Area

XIV Corps

Viti Levu, Fiji

II Island Command

Bougainville

XIV Corps

United States Army Forces in the Far East

Leyte and Samar

X Corps (Eighth Army)

Eighth Army

Cebu, Bohol and Negros Oriental

Eighth Army

XI Corps (Sixth Army)

XI Corps (Eighth Army)

Japan

XI Corps (Eighth Army)

The Americal Division, Inc.

WORLD WAR II DREW MANY THOUSANDS OF MEN INTO AND through the Americal Division from all corners of the nation, from all walks of life. Estimates of this number run as high as forty thousand. Death on the battlefields took 1,448 men from its ranks. Those who survived were scattered back across the length and breadth of the land by evacuation, rotation, readjustment and finally inactivation. Yet it was only natural, despite the now wide separation of the Division's veterans, that there should be in evidence a strong bond uniting—in spirit, at least—all of the men, a bond which neither time nor distance seems able to sever completely.

Even while the Americal Division was in the midst of the early stages of occupation duty in Japan shortly after VJ-day a group of ex-members of the Division were gathering to prepare plans for the foundation of a nationwide organization that would, through the years, perpetuate the name and the heritage of the Americal. As a result of the efforts of twenty former officers and men The Americal Division, Inc., was soon to come into existence.

By means of articles in local newspapers and by word of mouth, news of the first meeting of the organization spread throughout Greater Boston, eastern Massachusetts and other parts of New England. In late September of 1945 approximately 350 veterans of Guadalcanal, Bougainville and the Philippines met in Boston's Hotel Essex, a stone's throw from South Station, to officially form The Americal Division, Inc. Rapid increases in membership were quickly recorded as more and more of "the old gang" returned to civilian life from duty in the Pacific.

In the first Club election held early the following year Thomas J. Griffin, once a technician fifth grade in the 121st Medical Battalion, was chosen the organization's first commander. Under Commander Griffin's guidance the first Club offices were opened in Room 143, Kimball Building at 18 Tremont Street in downtown Boston. Commander Griffin was

succeeded in 1947 by ex-Captain Walter T. Anzoni of the 57th Engineers, under whose able direction the Club widened its range of membership.

In 1948, under a new commander, Dominic J. Bianculli, of the 125th Quartermaster Company, the Club moved its headquarters across the street to occupy the two top floors of a four-story building at 17 Tremont Street. On January 23 of that year—the sixth anniversary of the departure of Task Force 6814 from New York—work was begun on the redecorating and furnishing of the new Club headquarters.

Commander Anzoni in 1947 put into operation plans for the establishment of subordinate chapters in parts of Massachusetts as well as in the principal cities of Illinois and North Dakota. As opportunities for more active participation in Club activities were offered by these chapters many more Division veterans in these areas joined the ranks.

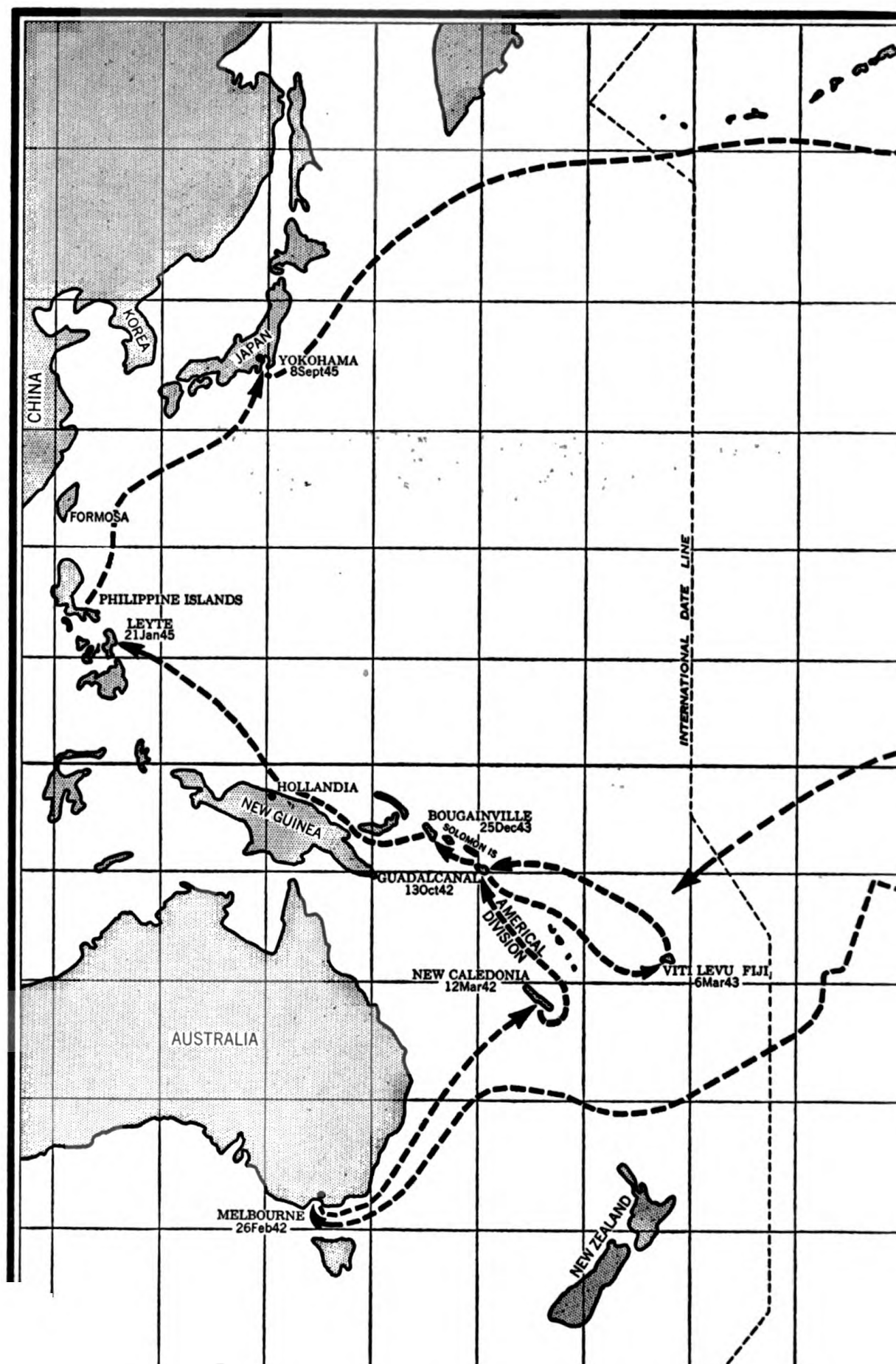
At the outset Club officials extended to each of the Americal's former commanders honorary membership cards. In addition, Mrs. Alexander M. Patch, Jr., widow of the Division's first commander, whose untimely death in 1946 was a loss to the Army, was chosen an honorary member and thus became the only woman whose name graces the Club's membership rolls. In 1946 Governor Maurice J. Tobin of Massachusetts expressed pleasure when he accepted his honorary membership card.

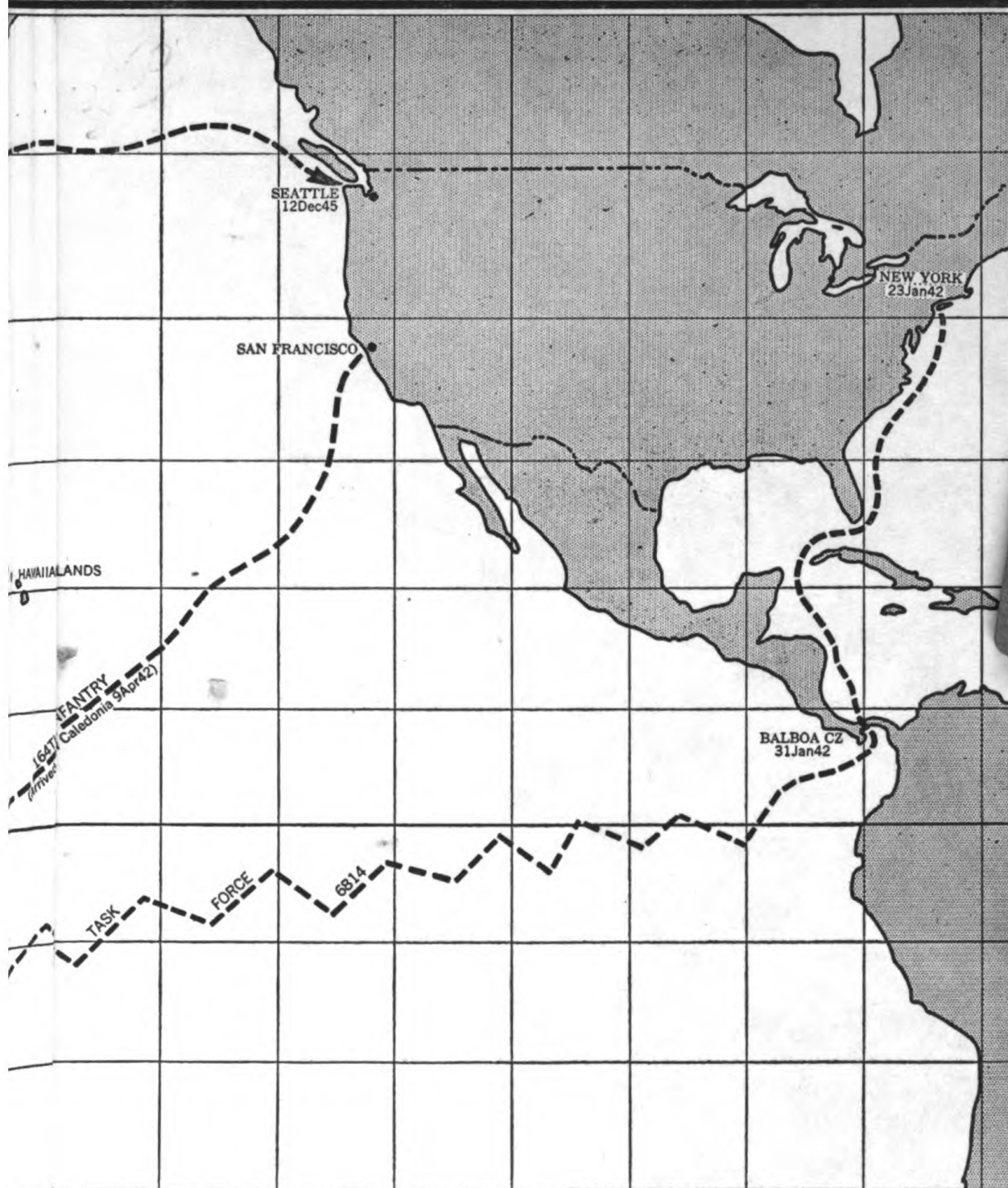
A similar honor was also accorded movie star Joe E. Brown who, in 1943, was made an honorary member of the Division itself during a brief visit to the Americal on Viti Levu, Fiji, on April 21 of that year. The Division's only Medal of Honor winner, Jessie R. Drowley, is also the holder of an honorary lifetime membership card given him as a tribute to his extraordinary heroism on Bougainville.

Although the organization had a most impressive and promising start, one which showed evidences of a bright future, hard times have fallen on it since 1948. To offset this and to rebuild the Club's sagging strength its officials, headed by Commander John J. Carey, began a new nationwide drive for membership with the annual reunion in Boston on January 23, 1951.

In an earlier appeal for increased activity in the Club the 1949 commander, Gerald Martel, commented:

"As an organization we cannot continue to maintain and improve upon the many wartime friendships each of us made in the Americal, we cannot continue to strive to perpetuate the name of the Americal, and we cannot initiate and carry out our planned program of assistance to our former comrades and their loved ones unless we have the wholehearted support of all the men of the Division, wherever they may be."





ROUTE OF TASK FORCE 6814
AND
AMERICAL DIVISION
1942-1945

